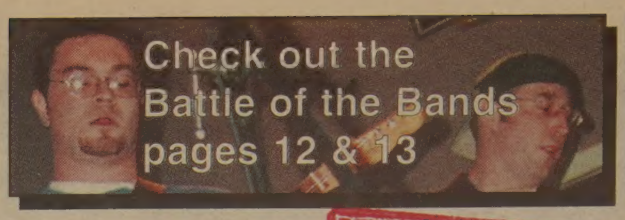

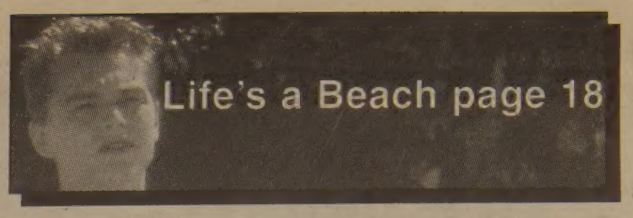

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NIAGARA NEWS

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Captain Bentley honoured with award

By JASON VIZBULIS
Staff Writer

One of Niagara College's finest athletes bids farewell to the court he has called home for four years.

Kerby Bentley, 23, the captain of the men's volleyball team, was honoured before the team's last home game on Feb. 10.

Dan Patterson, Niagara College president, and Ray Sarkis, head of the athletic department, presented Bentley with a plague for his contribution to the team and the school over his career.

Sarkis said, "This young man has been a true example of what a team player is all about. Since arriving at Niagara College four years ago he has never stopped working on making this program one of the best programs, not only in Ontario but also in Canada. He has been a true gentleman in every aspect of the word, both on and off the court and has always put his team first."

Bentley's accomplishments are many. He was a two-time member of the West team All-stars, Niagara College male athlete of the year in 1999, Canadian College's Athletics Association volleyball player of the month, Ontario College's Athletic Association player of the week and led his team during the 1998/99 season with 210 points.

Niagara College's men's volleyball coach Blair Cudmore praised Bentley's performance over the years.

"He brings a lot of heart to the program. He's a competitor and his desire to win is strong and certainly flows over to the other guys."

Kerby Bentley receives an Appreciation Award from Dan Patterson, Niagara College president, on Feb. 10, for his achievements on the volleyball court.
Photo by Mike Wencel

Patterson said Bentley "represents all the best of an athlete. He combines his studies with being a great athlete and is a great role model for the students. His enthusiasm and dedication to his sport and his studies are a winning combination. We're just delighted he is part of Niagara College and wish him luck with his future endeavours."

Bentley's future may have Niagara College in it. He has been offered the assistant coaching position next season.

"We hope for him to help us out next year," said Cudmore. "We're looking for him to take a coaching role along with myself and continue to get better. We have been getting better for five years now."

Bentley said, "I hope to help out. I will just have to find out what my work schedule is like."

Bentley said he didn't think about his last home game till he was driving to the game.

"I was a little sad but I'm kind of happy it is over with. When I think about it I get a little emotional. I had a good time this year. I met a lot of friends."

Bentley's family, from Caledon East, is planning to relocate to St. Catharines. This works out well for Bentley because he is in the college's Culinary Management program. He said he will look for a job in the Niagara Falls area and will work towards gaining his culinary certificate.

See related photo on page 23

Aboriginal Education Access hosts career days

By CASSANDRA SIMONS
Staff Writer

Students looking for activities in in the near future are welcome at the Aboriginal Career Days.

Sheri Longboat, manager of Niagara College's Aboriginal Education Access (AEA) Centre at Niagara College's Welland campus, said planning is under way for spring activities.

"As a part of the Aboriginal Education Training Strategy (AETS) funding received for this academic year for specialized Aboriginal student support services, the office is co-ordinating Aboriginal Career Days for March," she said.

The Career Days will be held on four consecutive Thursdays, beginning on March 9. They will be held at the Tecumseh Centre in front of the library from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Two different guests/speakers are scheduled to visit each Thursday. They are being drawn from the Aboriginal community of Six Nations and the Niagara Region Aboriginal organizations, she said.

"The goals of this are to provide awareness of Aboriginal careers and career sectors (and) to provide to our students various role models working in selective areas of study.

"It's important for students because it's adding another educational component specific to their needs while here at Niagara College. That's what our students seem to need."

Some of the areas the centre is hoping will be covered are information technology, health and community studies, engineering technology and law and security.

Continued on page 3

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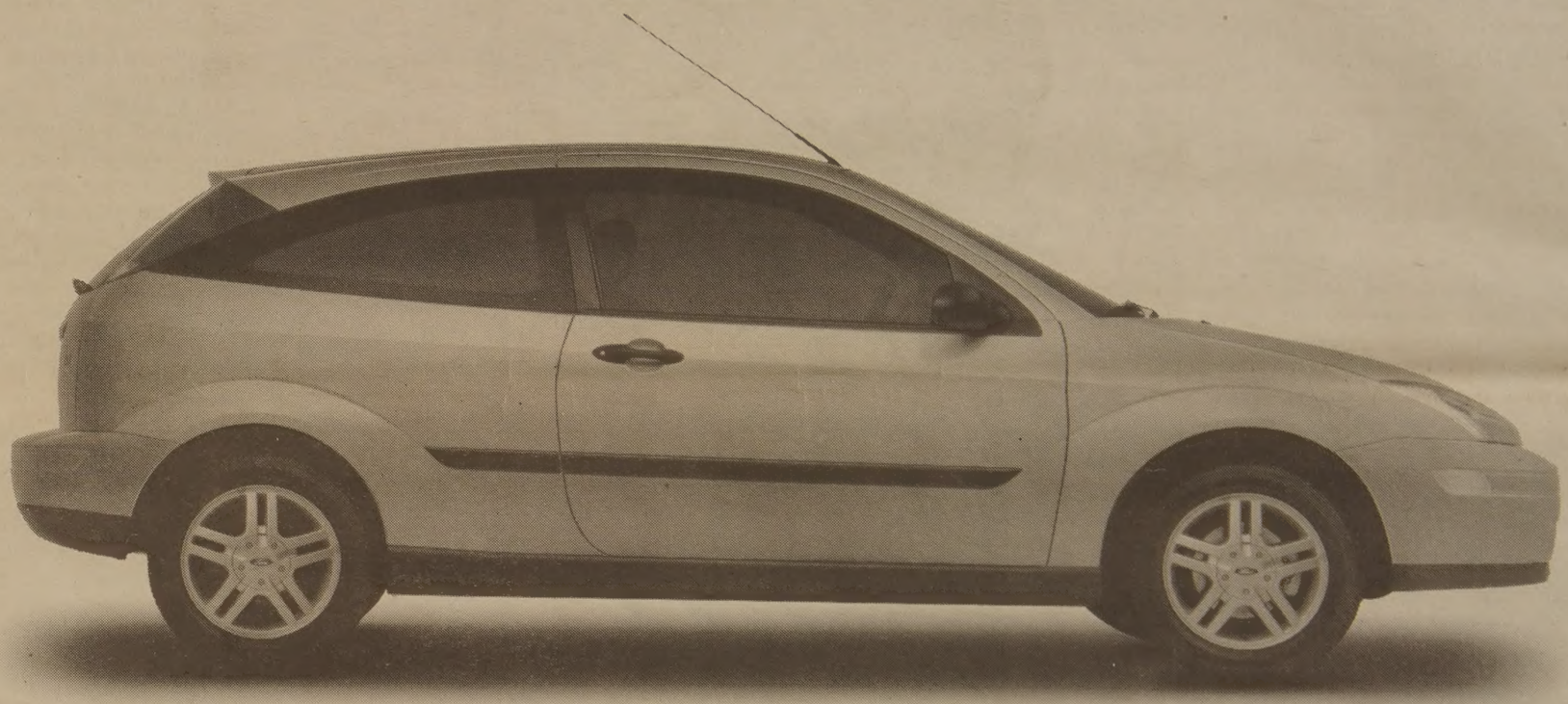

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SPECIAL EVENTS

Slaves' long road to freedom explored

Exploring history of Charleston in the 1800s

By NATSUKO TAMURA
Staff Writer

Telling the history of South Carolina means returning to the origins of black history in Africa.

During Black History Month, Dr. Bernard Powers was invited as a guest speaker to inform people about the development of slavery and the slaves' long road to freedom.

Powers's address was held in the Alumni Lounge, Schmon Tower, Brock University in St. Catharines on Feb. 11.

His lecture, titled Slavery and Freedom in the Old South: The Case of Charleston, South Carolina, mainly focused on life in, and the people of, Charleston in the pre-Civil War era.

Shown slides of old photographs, the crowd of about 40 viewed a period when Africans were imported to America and exploited by whites.

Using maps and charts, he said the roots of South Carolina blacks showed that 39 per cent originated from the west coast of Africa, in Angola.

Powers said the character of slaves differs in each region. Some were obedient and others were rebellious.

From left, Dennis Essar, chairman of the Black History Month planning committee, Brad Clarke, president of Brock University Student Union (BUSU), D.J. Tucker, a student in history, the guest speaker Dr. Bernard Powers, of the College of Charleston, John Kaethler, manager of the Office of International Services, and Kabir Abdurrahman, BUSU vice-president of university affairs, chat after the lecture in the Alumni Students' Centre, Brock University.

Photo by Natsuko Tamura

He depicted the real images of the 1880s, including tombstones, plantations, and basket making, and related them to the afflictions slaves had to bear.

Though cotton is the stereotypical product of "southern" slavery plantations, he said, production of rice and indigo surpassed cotton in the area.

The history of South Carolina, which appears in books and textbooks, is not "well balanced" because mostly whites wrote those, he pointed out.

"It's cultural arrogance."

Powers said he admires the city of Charleston, where many historical places have been restored and preserved.

For example, some buildings built right after the Civil War by a notable, highly educated black man have been preserved and are still being used by the College of Charleston, he added.

Born in Chicago, Powers is professor of history at the College of Charleston and holds degrees from Gustavus Adolphus College, in Minnesota, and Northwestern Illinois University.

After teaching at Columbia College and Northeastern Illinois University, he took a post at the College of Charleston, 1991.

His doctoral research centred on the social history of the black community in Charleston from 1820 to 1885, leading to the publication of his book, Black Charlestonian, in 1995.

He's an active member of the board of the Historic Charleston Foundation.

350 people may attend ACAATO

Ontario Premier Mike Harris won't be attending Conference 2000

By JOHN ROBBINS
Staff Writer

The media spotlight is set to shine on Niagara College this weekend as the college hosts the 25th annual meeting of the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario (ACAATO).

In addition to the media, organizers expect about 350 participants and their families will attend this year's conference, to be held Sunday and Monday at the Sheraton Fallsview Hotel and Conference Centre, in Niagara Falls.

Called Conference 2000, the event allows college presidents, board members, administrators and representatives of the provincial government the opportunity to discuss current issues facing Ontario's 25 community colleges.

ACAATO
Association of Colleges of Applied Arts & Technology of Ontario

However, the conference's highest-ranking guest has sent his regrets.

Stuart Watson, director of communications at ACAATO, confirmed Ontario Premier Mike Harris, who had been invited to present the Premier's Awards, will not be in attendance.

Instead, Dianne Cunningham, minister of training, colleges and universities, said Watson, will make the presentations on the premier's behalf.

"It's unfortunate that the premier is unable to attend. We are, however, pleased that Dianne Cunningham will be present," said Dan Patterson, president of Niagara College, in an interview Wednesday afternoon.

The Premier's Awards are presented each year to five college alumni in recognition of outstanding career achievement and contributions to society.

ACAATO is an advocacy and marketing association representing Ontario's 25 community colleges. The two-day conference is centred around ACAATO's annual general meeting, but includes workshops, panel discussions and speeches on a wide range of issues. This will include discussion about how colleges plan to deal with an anticipated 21-per-cent increase in college enrolment over the next four years, as well as a new governing charter.

Among keynote speakers at the conference, Jacquelyn Thayer Scott, president and vice-chancellor of the University College of Cape Breton, in Sydney, N.S., will speak about the role of colleges in social and economic development.

John Wetmore, president and chief executive officer of IBM Canada Ltd., will explore the importance of partnerships between colleges and corporations, during his address.

Also scheduled to address delegates are Ann Dowsett Johnston, associate managing editor of Maclean's magazine, and Christopher Newton, artistic director of the Shaw Festival, in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

About 30 "student ambassadors" from the college's Public Relations (Post-graduate) program and Special Event Management (Post-graduate) program will be assisting conference organizers and guests with activities throughout the two-day event.

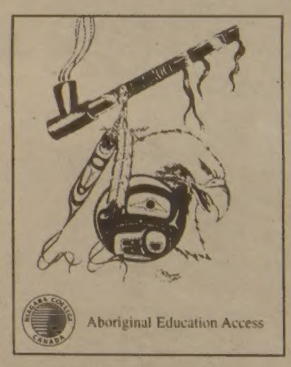
Aboriginal events aim to raise awareness

Continued from front

"Everyone is welcome to stop by. There's much to be learned and shared."

Longboat said the AEA works "closely" with the Aboriginal community through the Aboriginal Education Management Circle and "shares in promoting community happenings.

As well, a number of Aboriginal meetings have been planned in the Niagara Region.



Niagara College AEA has sponsored four students to attend a four-day conference in Hamilton. Dreams of Today, Visions for Tomorrow will be held Feb. 22 to Feb. 25 at the Sheraton Hotel, Hamilton. It is being presented by Woodland Cultural Centre, New Credit First Nation Education Department and the federal Indian and Northern Affairs department.

There will be speakers and workshops for students to attend at the conference.

The Aboriginal Diabetes Support Group for Fort Erie is hosting a meeting March 13 and March 27 from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Fort Erie Native Centre on Buffalo Road. There will be refreshments and door prizes.

The Niagara Chapter of Native Women is presenting the "Status of Native Women in Canada," with a special guest speaker, Marilyn Buffalo, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada on Tuesday, Feb. 22. The meeting will be held at 1 p.m. at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Niagara Boulevard, Fort Erie.

The Native Women's Group is having a logo contest and the winner will receive $100. The deadline for entries is Feb. 23.

For more information on these events, contact Longboat at Niagara College AEA at 735-2211 ext. 7774 or 7414.

CAMPUS COVERAGE

Maid of the Mist expansion will boost enrolment

Staff, students exchange views about college's plans to expand Niagara Falls campus

By MARTIN McQUAIG
Staff Writer

Niagara College may be expanding again. With a proposal to the Ontario government requesting $5.3 million, and a $2-million commitment from local business, the college is planning to expand the Maid of the Mist Centre (MMC) in Niagara Falls to a two-level facility.

On Feb. 15, college President Dan Patterson met with students and faculty at the MMC for an open discussion and an outline of the college's long-term vision for the campus.

"This is an opportunity to talk about themes that are very important to students, faculty and support staff," Patterson said about the open discussion format.

About 30 students and teachers attended and discussed the college's proposal to expand on its Hospitality and Tourism and Culinary Management programs.

"There will be an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 job openings in the next few years," said Patterson regarding the hospitality and tourism industry in the Niagara region.

"Competition is no longer the neighbour down the street. Competition is the world."

Patterson added that it is important to expand the campus because its "current physical structure is really at its limit."

The college is adopting a five-year expansion plan at the MMC. Patterson said the expansion would help accommodate the expected 21-per-cent college enrolment increase when Grade 13 is eliminated from the secondary-school curriculum.

The expansion will also allow more Niagara College graduates to fill the increasing skills shortage in the region's growing hospitality and tourism industry.

"An estimated 14 million people visit this area every year," said Patterson. "It is important (to the industry) to have a strong workforce with good customer service skills."

Dave Taylor, director of Hospitality and Tourism at the MMC, made a brief presentation to the discussion group outlining the five-year plan for the campus. The goal is to "provide the skilled and knowledgeable workforce needed to fuel industry growth."

The plan is to expand the campus by 35,200 square feet, allowing for an enrolment increase of 75 per cent.

There are 160 students in Culinary Management, 130 in Hospitality and Tourism and 145 in Hotel and Restaurant Management.

"Visitors are coming to this region with higher expectations and demand a higher quality of service," said Taylor.

The new-look campus would include "state-of-the-art" food labs, multi-purpose classrooms, improved corporate training facilities with video conferencing, and an enhanced atmosphere of hospitality. A student residence is also planned for the future.

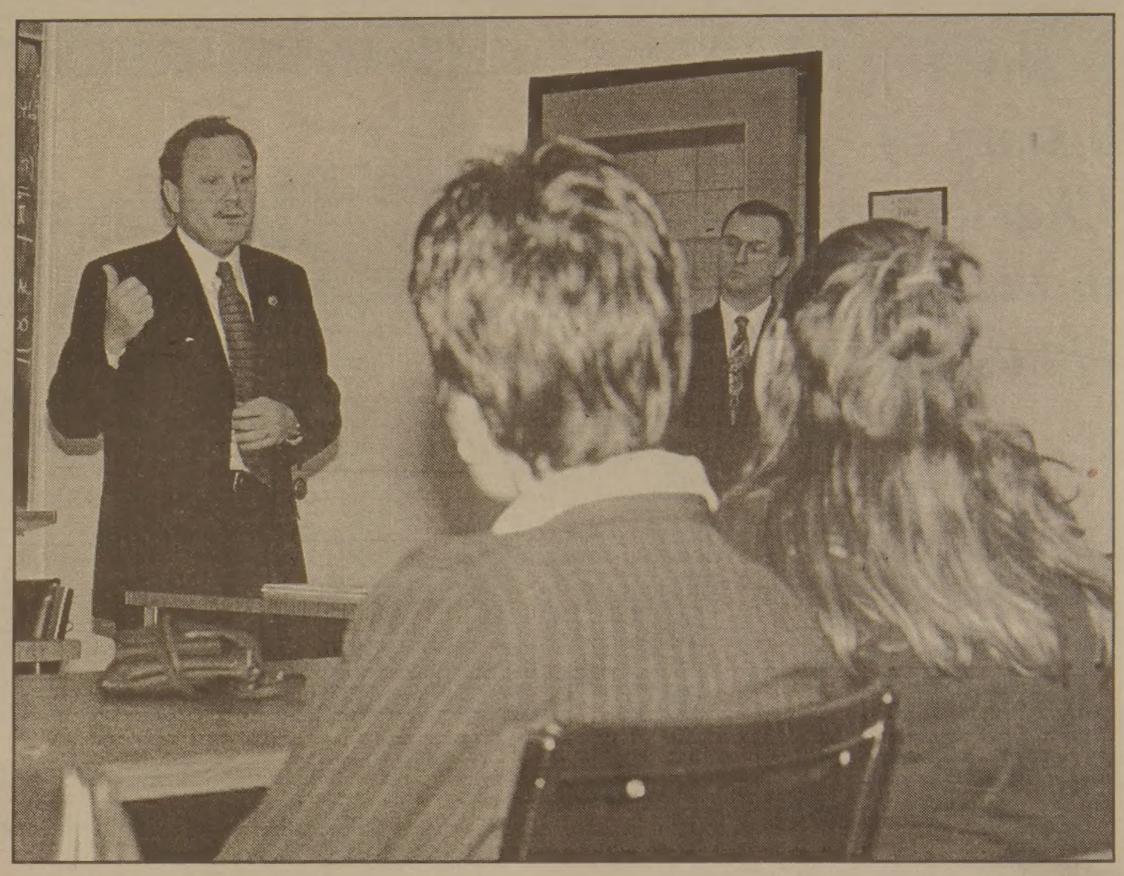
"We must make sure we take our time to ensure this becomes a premier hospitality and tourism facility in Canada," Taylor added.

Tanya Cegnar, MMC's Student Administrative Council vice-president of campus events, said the expansion would be a welcome change. She said it is "very annoying" when conferences are held in the centre of the building and students are forced to walk around the building to get to their classes.

Andrea Bowman, also of SAC, said, "This is good for the Maid of the Mist Centre."

"This campus needs more room to house students that are coming in for training."

The government is expected to make an announcement regarding the allocation of SuperBuild money by the end of the month.



Dan Patterson, president of Niagara College, talks to staff and students during an open forum at the Maid of the Mist Centre, in Niagara Falls, Feb. 15. About 30 people gathered to discuss the college's $7.3-million plan to expand and renovate the Maid of the Mist Centre over a five-year period.

Photo by Martin McQuaig

College education prepares grads for work: minister

By JOHN ROBBINS
Staff Writer

If you're graduating this June, chances are you won't have to wait long to get a job.

That's because a new report released by the provincial government shows nine out of 10 college graduates are getting jobs within six months of graduating.

The report, in which more than 31,500 college graduates and 6,000 employers were surveyed, was unveiled by Dianne Cunningham, minister of training, colleges and universities, during a press conference at Conestoga College, in Kitchener, Ont., Feb. 7.

"Clearly a college education is preparing young people for success in the workforce," said Cunningham, in a press release.

The report, the minister said, is intended to give people considering a college education "the information they need to make informed choices for the future."

Starting next year, the provincial government plans to publish reports reflecting employment prospects for all post-secondary school students, including those attending university.

"Students and parents deserve a clear picture of the ability of colleges and universities to successfully prepare graduates for jobs, and we intend to give them just that," Cunningham said.

This year's report, which reflects the employment status of students who graduated from an Ontario college during the 1997-1998 academic year, is the 10th annual report of its kind issued by the ministry. However, this is the first year the employment profile contains information about part-time students or the degree of satisfaction expressed by graduates or their employers about college education.

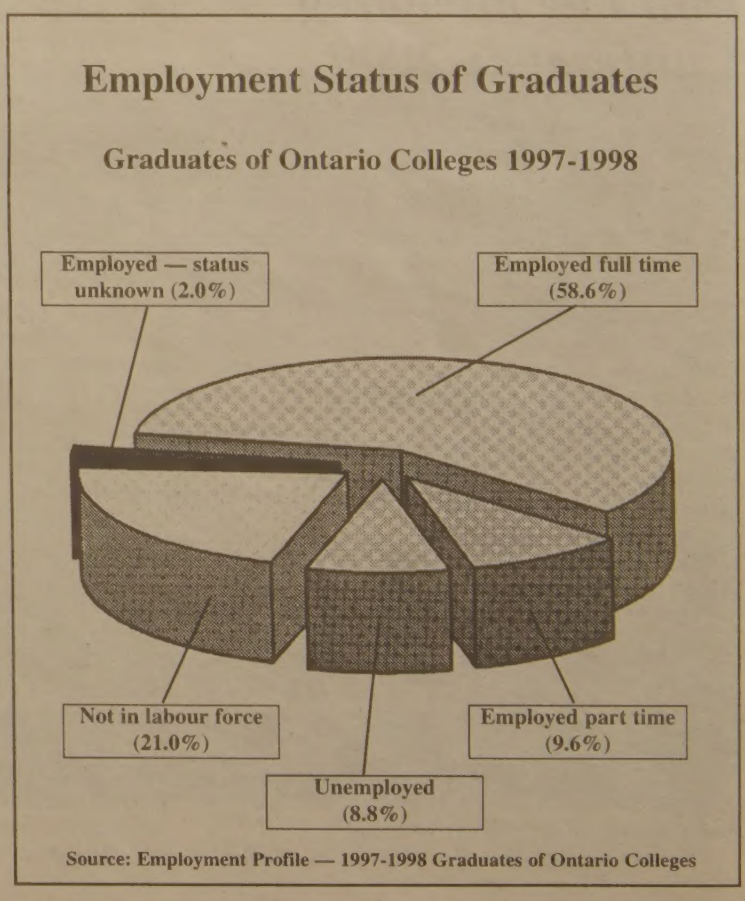
"This report emphasizes the importance of a college education," said Dan Patterson, president of Niagara College, in an interview with the *Niagara News*.

"It helps that the economy is strong," he added.

Highlights of the 1997-1998 college graduate employment profile include the following:

- The number of graduates who had found work within six months of graduating is 88.8 per cent, 2.2 per cent higher than the year before.
- Of employers who had hired a college graduate, 79.8 per cent reported they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the quality of a college education.
- Among the total number of college graduates surveyed, 69.1 per cent said they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the education they received.
- 75.6 per cent of college graduates employed full time had jobs at least partially related to their program of study.
- The average annual starting salary of college graduates employed full time in jobs related to their program of study was $26,748.

While individual colleges in Ontario have made their own 1997-1998 graduate employment statistics available for some time, this report represents the first publication of average employment statistics for colleges provincewide.


Employment Status of Graduates
Graduates of Ontario Colleges 1997-1998
Employed — status unknown (2.0%)
Employed full time (58.6%)
Not in labour force (21.0%)
Employed part time (9.6%)
Unemployed (8.8%)
Source: Employment Profile — 1997-1998 Graduates of Ontario Colleges

GRADS' ACHIEVEMENTS

Local pair building a model for success

Dan Bernard and Sandra Schram say they're looking forward to the grand opening of Premiere Models on Feb. 18. The couple will host a wine and cheese open house and showcase the variety of programs and services they offer.

Photo by Martin McQuaig

St. Catharines couple showing professionalism beyond their ages

By MARTIN McQUAIG
Staff Writer

Less than a year after graduating from Niagara College's Business Administration — Human Resource Management (Co-op) program, Dan Bernard is putting his education to work.

Bernard, 22, of St. Catharines, and his girlfriend, Sandra Schram, are starting their own modelling agency and school.

The couple combined his entrepreneurial skills with her five years of experience as a model and modelling instructor to create Premiere Models.

"Barry Tober (an entrepreneurship studies instructor at Niagara College) really helped me get the business started," said Bernard.

Classes began Feb. 8, but the two young businesspeople say they are looking forward to their grand opening and open house Feb. 18.

Along with friends and family, Bernard and Schram spent about two months renovating their studios and offices at 13 Secord Dr., in St. Catharines.

"The place looked like a bomb went off," said Bernard about the building when they first saw it.

"Now it looks professional and it's comfortable to work in."

Schram, 19, is a graduate of Denis Morris High School in St. Catharines. She left another agency last year where she was responsible for class organization and teaching.

She has 10 students enrolled, but says she is busy consulting with prospective students.

She says Premiere Models has courses and programs for people at all levels. The first level is a three-month self-improvemen course. The program can extend six or nine months depending on the level at which the individual student is comfortable. Students have opportunities to participate in local fashion shows Schram will organize and choreograph.

Schram says she can connect her more serious students with local modelling job and with agencies in Toronto.

Bernard is a part-time student at Brock University. He said it is difficult to take classes and run his own business at the same time.

"It's tough," he said, "but you have to take advantage of an opportunity like this."

He has been asked by Tober to consider being a guest speaker in her third-year entrepreneurship class at the college's Glendale campus.

Premiere Models is registered with the Modelling Association of Canada. Its first fashion show will be at the Fairview Mall in St. Catharines on April 22.

Bernard and Schram have been dating for just under a year.

LASA graduate says co-op 'a great experience'

Falls native wanted to be officer since high school

By SHANNON DEARY
Staff Writer

On the road, from behind the steering wheel of his police cruiser, Constable Lou Greco sees the world. It was from there, as a Law and Security Administration (LASA) student, he found how to apply what he'd learned in the classroom to the field.

Greco, 27, of Niagara Falls, Ont., graduated from Niagara College in 1993.

He works for the Niagara Regional Police (NRP) in the Patrol Uniform Branch.

"I do basic patrolling, house calls, mostly minor offences," said Greco.

A high school field placement in the NRP's law office, doing "basic administration work," sparked his interest in what came to be his career. Greco said he enrolled at Niagara College to further his police knowledge. As part of that training, he was selected for a police co-op to go out on the road with other officers.

"This was a great experience," said Greco. "I learned all aspects of policing and how much work there really is. "It's a long process to go through before you really grasp what you have learned and how to apply it to what you are doing."

Greco said the program Niagara College offers for policing "definitely" covered what he needed to know. He said the law classes were very important, and they made a big contribution to his knowledge today.

"Especially the classes taught by Mr. (Gino) Arcaro (co-ordinator of the School of Justice Studies — Police Foundations program and LASA). They were right on the button," said Greco. "He is a very intelligent man and very smart at what he does."

Greco's first step after college was working for the NRP in the court unit, for a year and a half, before switching to the patrol uniform branch.

He's heard "all the excuses in the book," when it comes to speeding tickets.

"I've heard everything from they didn't realize they were speeding, or they're late for work, to it's not their car," said Greco. He said most of the time he "lets 'em off."

"A warning sometimes is just as effective as giving a ticket.

"We try to satisfy people and give them a positive image of the police." He emphasizes the police are "not bad people, and they do their job just like everyone else in the world."

However, Greco said, police work is not all just about catching the "bad guys." Sometimes the situation is "very emotional."

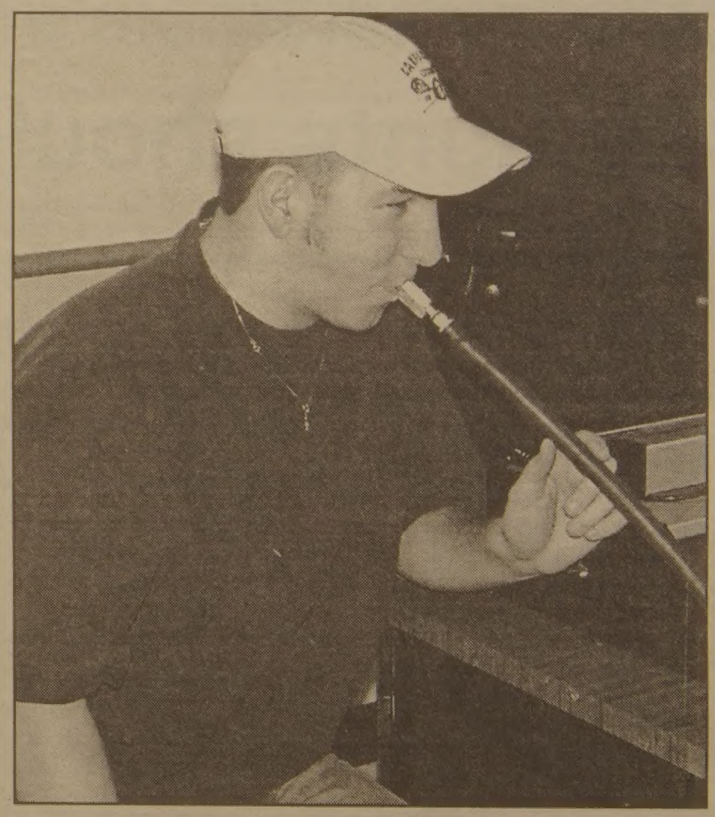
"It's hard not to let yourself get emotionally involved. You can't let your emotions get in the way of doing your job properly. You have to learn to separate your emotions from what you should be doing in any given situation," explained Greco.

Recently married in October 1999, he said his wife is supportive of his career, but the night shifts are a little hard for them both to handle.

"She'll get used to it. We both will," said Greco.

His plans are to carry on his duties as a police officer, to gain the experience that he needs and to move up through the ranks.

Take a deep breath and blow



Law Clerk (Co-op) program student Shane Wannamaker takes a breathalizer test while Mike Woods, Niagara Regional Police officer looks on. The test was part of a presentation for the programs students, which took place on Feb. 17 in the Simcoe building.

Photo by Miranda Hubbs

EDITORIAL

The Niagara News is a practical lab for the Journalism-Print program, covering the college community and other areas of interest.
Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the management of the Niagara News or the administration of
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Children must be our top priority

Should people be licensed to have children?

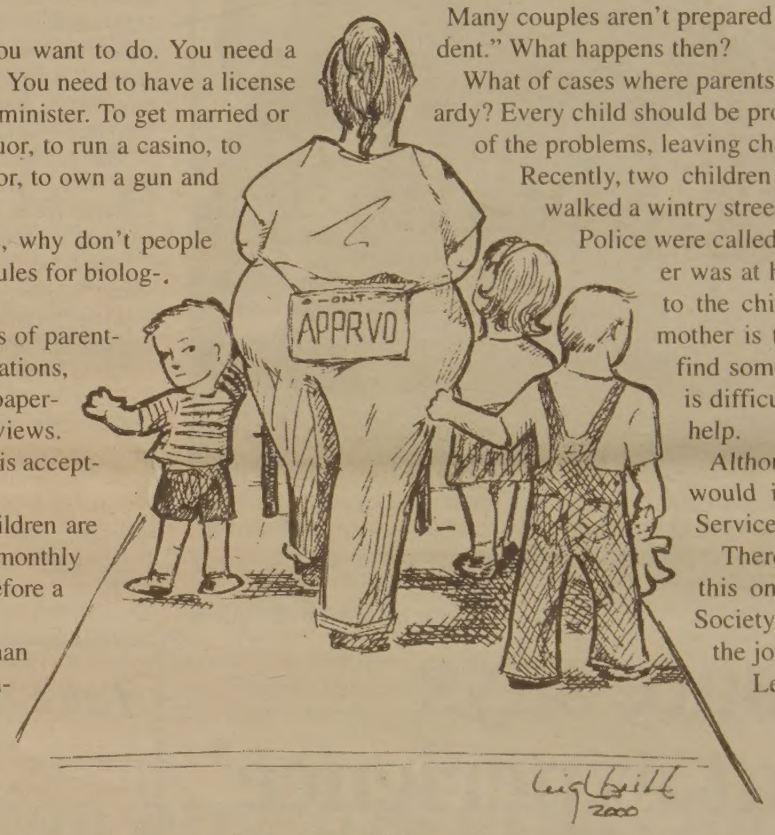
You need a license for almost anything else you want to do. You need a license to go fishing, hunting, driving or drinking. You need to have a license if you want to open a day-care facility or to be a minister. To get married or practice medicine, you need a license. To sell liquor, to run a casino, to open any sort of business, including being a vendor, to own a gun and to run a forklift, you need a license.

With all of these activities requiring a license, why don't people need one in order to have children? Why are the rules for biological parents less stringent than for adoptive ones?

People who want to adopt must attend six weeks of parenting classes and have medical and physical examinations, personal and group interviews, fill out lots of paperwork, have an in-home evaluation including interviews. A social worker even goes to the home to ensure it is acceptable.

If adoptive parents have older children, those children are interviewed too. There is a probationary period of monthly home visits and then the adoptive parents appear before a judge.

They are often better qualified as parents than many biological parents because of the government's scrutiny of them. Biological parents aren't required to attend any sort of parenting classes to have children; they just go ahead and have them.



Many couples aren't prepared to have children. Some are pregnant "by accident." What happens then?

What of cases where parents' action, or inaction, put their children in jeopardy? Every child should be protected, but the community isn't always aware of the problems, leaving children in vulnerable situations.

Recently, two children clad only in their pyjamas, left their home and walked a wintry street to the corner store. They were cold and alone. Police were called. The brother and sister told police their mother was at home, sick in bed. Because two citizens came to the children's aid, they were kept from harm. If a mother is too sick to attend to her children, she should find someone who can watch them for her. Granted, it is difficult, but there will always be someone who can help.

Although the children were safely returned home, would it have been better if Family and Children Services had been involved?

There are children in situations much worse than this one, where their health and safety are at risk. Society should move away from parents "learning on the job" to formalized certified training.

Let's take care of our children.

Cassandra Simons

Students should exhibit more willpower

College years are supposed to be the best years of one's life, yes, but they can also be the toughest.

One is now away from home for the first time and faced with making responsible decisions. It isn't always easy, but no one ever said it was. With all this freedom one has to learn to handle it responsibly. It's a scary thought, but now is the time when – even though one hates to admit it – all the preaching that parents did about responsibility will actually be helpful.

Possibly the most difficult decision for college students is whether to study or party. The obvious choice is to study but it doesn't always happen that way.

One wants to do well in school so one can have a good career but also have fun with friends.

Every year students who prefer to party flunk out and end up flipping burgers for minimum wage.

Well, friends, listen up, because there is a way to have good grades and fun at the same time. It is called having the willpower to prioritize and to "just say no."

That is easier said than done, of course, but that is what willpower is all about. Here's what to do: at the beginning of each week sit down and designate work times and then whatever is left over is party time.

The hard part is telling your friends "no" when they want to do something but you have work to do. Sometimes one will give in, but just don't let it happen too often, and all will be OK.

Miranda Hubbs

Your voice or opinion is welcome in our Letters to the Editor section. Our policy regarding letter submissions is this: All letters must be received on the Friday one week prior to publication. Each letter must include the writer's name, college identification number and program of study.
All letters must be signed and include a day and evening telephone number for verification use only.
All letters can be mailed or brought to the Niagara News newsroom, Room S212, Simcoe Building, Welland Campus.

ADVERTISING RULES: The advertiser agrees that the publisher shall not be liable for damages arising out of errors in advertisements beyond the amount paid for the space actually occupied by the portion of the advertisement in which the error occurred. This applies whether such error is due to the negligence of its servants or otherwise. There shall be no liability for non-insertions of any advertisement beyond the amount paid for such advertisement.
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VIEWPOINTS

Feb. 29 here again, four years later

By CASSANDRA SIMONS
Staff Writer

Leap, leap. This is a very special year and month.

Chronologers will attest that any time a year is exactly divisible by four, the year, known as a leap year, has an added day, Feb. 29, known as Leap Day.

However, if the year is the last of the century, for example, 1900 or 2000, it's only a leap year if the year is divisible by 400.

So, 1900 wasn't a leap year, but 2000 is. This arrangement is to make sure the seasons always occur during the same months each year.

A year is defined as the time between two successful passages of the Sun through the vernal equinox. That equinox is the instant when the Sun is above the Earth's equator while going from south to north. It is the time astronomers use as the definition of the beginning of Spring.

Such a year is called the Tropical year with a length of 365.24219 days.

In 46 BC Julius Caesar created the Julian calendar, which was used until 1548. The Julian calendar was 12 months long each year and was 365.25 days. This worked out by having three consecutive years 365 days long and one year 366 days.

The difference between the actual length of the year, 365.24219, and the adopted, 365.35, doesn't seem to be important, but over hundreds of years the difference would mean the seasons would be out of sync with the date.

Pope Gregory the 13th changed the calendar to the Gregorian calendar in 1548.

A year is defined as the time between two successful passages of the Sun through the vernal equinox.

The change of the two calendars meant the change of the leap-year rule (the only-divisible-by-400 rule).

The difference between the adopted length, now 365.2425 days, and the true length will not have a serious effect for thousands of years; in fact, the difference amounts to three days in 10,000 years.

A number of traditions and folklore are based on this special accounting of time.

• 1288 — Scotland established leap day as one when a woman could propose marriage to a man. If he refused, he was required to pay a fine.

• 1860 — The first electric tabulating machine, the forerunner of the calculator was invented by Herman Hollerith. The assumed cause of why the machine only calculated numbers divisible by four is that the invention occurred on this day.

• 1904 — A seven-man commission was created in Washington, D.C., to hasten the construction of the Panama Canal. The work didn't actually begin until May 4.

• 1932 — Bing Crosby and the Mills Brothers teamed up to record *Shine* for Brunswick Records.

• 1944 — For the first time, a woman was appointed secretary of a national party, Dorothy McElroy, the Democratic National Committee.

• 1964 — *I Want to Hold your Hand*, by the Beatles, was in its fifth week of being No. 1 on the pop charts.

• 1992 — Mr. Big hit it big this day moving to No. 1 with *To Be With You*. It was No. 1 for the next three weeks.

Can you think of an interesting thing you could do on Feb. 29?

To learn more about other interesting Feb. 29 occurrences, or more on leap year or Leap Day, visit Web site www.mystro.com/Feb29today.htm.

Writer's worst nightmare: writer's block

By MIKE WENCEL
Staff Writer

You slide behind the steering wheel, slip your key into the ignition and . . . nothing happens. You twist back and forth, pound your head on the dashboard a few times and mumble words that would make a nightclub comedian blush.

Still nothing happens. The battery is dead — and you're not going anywhere until you get a boost.

We all know what it takes to boost a car, but what do you do when you slide in front of a computer, put your fingers onto the keyboard and . . . nothing happens? You go blank and start sweating because the deadline is the next day. You're cursing at the cursor, but it doesn't do you any good. Your writing has stalled and the story remains in your head.

What is happening is a writer's worst nightmare: writer's block.

At least once in their career, reporters will suffer this erratic affliction, just as I have several times this year writing for the Niagara News. I thought I would never suffer from this because I love sports and I write sports articles, but I was wrong.

You go blank and start sweating because the deadline is the next day.

Sports news is one of the hardest topics to write about because you always want to keep the readers' attention without giving a replay of the entire game.

I think I have a great idea for an article, but when I type my byline, that's all I have for one hour — my stinkin' byline.

I want to make my stories fresh, original and sounding spontaneous, not the predictable boring play-by-play sports story.

I have my interviews, stats, scores and my laptop. What more can I ask for in order to write a story?

I take a break, flip on the computer and there sits my byline glaring in my face again. I feel as if my head's going to explode.

Deadline is approaching, but I have found a cure and my lead is started. The story is almost finished, and I have two sentences left, then I'm done. I have overcome the most horrible thing a writer can encounter.

I wish you could send the byline and two words "writers block" and submit that for print. Not everyone would know what it means, but every writer would, and I'm sure they would appreciate the gesture because writer's block is every writer's worst nightmare.

Letter to editor: activation of fire alarm isn't a drill

Dear Editor:

The first of two scheduled fire drills for 2000 were conducted in late January.

Overall, all campuses responded well, with the traditional longer winter response.

Please note that there are only two scheduled fire drills — January and September.

In all other cases, activation of the fire alarm system is not a drill.

Everyone within college buildings must evacuate at the sound of the fire alarm system.

There are no exceptions to this directive, other than those stipulated under the guidelines for evacuation for students with disabilities.

DO NOT assume that the fire alarm may only be a false alarm. This can only be ascertained once the building has been emptied and the cause for the alarm fully investigated. All staff, students and visitors must abide by the guidelines listed below.

Upon hearing the fire alarm:

1. Everyone must leave the building.
2. All instructions from fire wardens must be followed.
3. Doors are to be closed, but not locked.
4. Classroom lights may be left in the "on" position.
5. Fire separation doors must be closed.
6. Everyone must remain at least 50 feet from the building.
7. Take any belongings that you have in your possession; do not go to lockers to retrieve any additional equipment or belongings.
8. Do not re-enter the building until final approval is given by college security, the fire department or college fire wardens.

Thank you,
Rick Demers,
Niagara College's manager, Health, Safety and Security Department.

BE SAFE WALKING AT NIGHT

Use Niagara's walk–out service when you're walking to your car or to any of the buildings on campus at night.

6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.
Monday to Thursday

FREE OF CHARGE

Corrections

In the Jan. 18, 2000, issue of the Niagara News incorrect information appeared in the article "Relieve stress through aromatherapy" on page 3. Leanne Guay is not a registered massage therapist under the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario. She has a certificate in aromatherapy. The cost comparison cited is not reflective of provision of services.

Also in that issue incorrect information appeared in the article "Rama offers Award of Excellence." On page 9 the Director of Public Relations position should have been identified as Sherry Lawson, director of corporate affairs and public relations.

On page 2, in the Feb. 11, 2000 issue of Niagara News, incorrect information appeared in the article "Renovations will 'attract new students.'" The Student Administrative Council (SAC) is not putting $370,700 a year in their capital reserve fund. SAC is putting $37,700 a year in thier capital reserve fund.

It is the policy of Niagara News to correct errors of fact.

VIEWPOINTS

Mother-child relationship victorious

By CASSANDRA SIMONS
Staff Writer

To any adult's eye, the pastor's daughter was an outgoing, polite 16-year-old girl. To her friends, she was the life of the party.

Then she ran away from home and got pregnant. That was more than four years ago. Since then, my life has changed — drastically.

I was only 16. My first thought was "how can I possibly tell my parents and hope to live?"

I put off telling them for as long as possible. I was two and a half months pregnant when my baby's father kicked me in the stomach, twice. He held me by my neck against the wall, spit at me and threw me down five flights of stairs. It was time for me to leave. No matter what my parents thought or what they felt about my being pregnant, they wouldn't do that to me.

My parents were devastated, but they supported me in every way possible.

My pregnancy was awful. I was sick all day, every day, and I was put on a strict six-meal-a-day diet because I was too small to house my baby.

Then one night while I was getting ready for bed it happened. My water broke. But wait a minute, it was too early, almost three months too early. Two days later I gave birth to a baby boy.

I named him Nicholas, which means "victorious."

Oh, my God, was he ever ugly. I cried. I thought all babies were supposed to look gorgeous. Why did mine look so much like a turtle?

During my pregnancy, between racing back and forth from the toilet, I completed eight high school courses through correspondence. I still needed to complete another eight before I could graduate from Grade 12. There was no way I could possibly do it.

I had a brand new baby who had major stomach problems, slept for 20 minutes at a time off and on all through the day and night. and cried constantly. Knowing that I would never consent to his living with his father, I was going to be his only example.

Not wanting my son to think he could sit on his behind all of his life and let the government pay for his way, I was going to have to finish high school and get a job.

I went back to school and started working as a waitress part time. After completing Grade 12, I knew that my life would never be complete working as a waitress making minimum wage, so I moved to Welland to go to college.

I am in my second year of the Journalism-Print program and my son, now three and a half, goes to the Niagara College Child Care Centre.

I never have a clue as to what to expect from my life two days in a row.

Cassandra and Nicholas look into the mirror to see the mess after his second birthday.

Submitted photo

Some days at 4 a.m. my son will climb the stairs to my room and get in bed with me. Other days I'll come down the stairs and he'll have made me breakfast — pancakes, made out of laundry detergent, Comet, eggs or some other disastrous ingredients.

My son climbs onto counters, squeezes toothpaste on the floor, makes mess after mess, and then wonders why I get upset when I've just cleaned up a mess. He pulls my hair, unrolls the toilet paper, cries and has nightmares.

He climbs on me when I'm trying to write stories for the Niagara News, hits me when I'm busy doing school work and not paying attention to him, dances with me and helps me clean the bathroom.

My son does these and much more. A lot of the time he just plain exhausts me and sometimes I don't know what to do.

We are victorious because we love each other, and I wouldn't change anything for the world.

One time after he went to bed I started crying. I was stressed out from trying to cope with my everyday life. He came out of his room, climbed up onto my knees, wiped my eyes dry and said, "Mommy don't cry. It's OK, 'cause I love you."

Even though I've been tired for the past four years and still cry sometimes when I'm alone and stressed, I think of my son, and I remember that incident.

Even though I've already changed his clothes four different times so that we can go out, and even though he just painted my walls with ketchup, or put gum in my hair and now he's swimming in milk that he just poured all over my kitchen floor, it's OK. We are victorious because we love each other and I wouldn't change anything for the world.

School, home, social life stressful yet beneficial

Solve your problems to learn life's useful lessons

By SHANNON DEARY
Staff Writer

Life is just too hard!

Have you ever felt as if everything you have grown up learning is slipping through your fingertips as you struggle to keep your grip, trying harder and harder to hold on?

The more you reach out, you fall a little further.

How do you stop this? How do you help yourself from self-destructing? No one really understands. I'm not telling anyone who reads this just my own life story. Rather, I'm letting those who feel the same know they are not alone.

It feels as though I live three separate lives: my school life, my family life and my social life.

Parents only want the best for you, but they don't understand that they make it harder for you. The pressure your parents put on you to accomplish everything you can, and be successful, is more stress than living life itself. Sure you want to be successful, but trying to show your parents, trying to prove to them that one day you will be successful, is harder than gaining that success.

I would give anything to make my parents proud of me, and I try my hardest not to disappoint them. They don't even know half of my life adventures, because I'm scared of what they might think of the choices I have made.

School life is the biggest part of success, whether you want to believe it or not. You go to school to learn what it is you need to know to be successful. However, the amount of work that comes with it — and having to juggle it around a part-time job - is far harder than just attending high school.

School life is the biggest part of success, whether you want to believe it or not. You go to school to learn what it is you need to know to be successful.

I feel as though I've grown a great deal. I'm learning responsibility (whether my parents want to believe it or not). They could be right, though, that I might be growing up too fast. I can't help it. Life is moving at a fast pace and I'm stuck in the middle just trying to get by like everyone else.

I've learned that without having a part-time job I wouldn't be able to put gas in my car to get me to school every day, or get me to the places I want and need to go. My salary also means I have money to spend the way I want and on what I want. That's what growing up is all about.

Lately I've been feeling exhausted. My body feels run down. As for my mood swings, just ask my boyfriend.

My family life feels like a break. Time with them gives me a chance to relax for more than five minutes in my own home, where I feel most comfortable. I look forward to my bed at night. I can't wait to get home and curl up beneath the covers to allow my body to shut down for the few hours I usually get.

Nevertheless, I feel I have to walk on eggshells at home. My parents just don't understand that I have my own life outside their boundaries.

My social life? I have a boyfriend of almost two years and my parents absolutely hate him. How hard do you think that is? I love my parents, I appreciate everything they do for me, and I am thankful for everything they give me, but I don't know how to express it to them. They just don't understand how hard life feels for me right now, and their disapproval of him only makes it more difficult. It's hard loving someone you feel you shouldn't.

That's what life is all about: finding love. Emotions are the number one thing in a person's life. How often do your parents see their parents? Probably not as much as they see each other. They spend every day together and every part of their lives is shared. I wish my parents could understand that.

My boyfriend is a part of my life, not theirs. Every day we are together because we want to be. We get through things together, just as my parents do, and relax together, as they do too.

Love is hard, but if you do love, that should be an accomplishment and nothing else should matter. Yet, it does.

I'm going to Scotland at the end of March for my field placement and I believe it will be the best thing for me. The time there will give me a chance to be by myself with my own thoughts as I try to discover what I want to do with my life. It will be a good opportunity to get away from everything and everyone and to get my head together, without the distractions of my life here. I can decide what I want out of life. Isn't my decision all that matters, after all?

ENGINEERING

Niagara College graduate enjoys drafting, looks forward to future career as a computer architect

Denise VanOsch, at work, in her office at Matthews Cameron Heywood — Kerry T. Howe Surveying Ltd., in Niagara Falls.
Photo by Jamie White

She chose program based on students' opinions

By JAMIE WHITE
Staff Writer

Unhappy in her previous position at Blue Water Currency, Denise VanOsch, 30, of Fort Erie, enrolled at Niagara College for a career change.

VanOsch spent three years at the University of Western Ontario, in London, taking a variety of courses with a major focus in sociology. She left Western before finishing her bachelor's degree.

VanOsch worked as a currency exchange teller during her three years away from school. She says she was unhappy in the job and decided to make some life changes.

VanOsch applied to an accounting program, an interior design program and the Construction Engineering Technology — Architecture program, all at Niagara College. Accepted into all three programs, she chose the three-year Construction Engineering program based on past students' opinions of the program.

"I was always interested in architecture," says VanOsch. "It was one of my strong points, and it was a field I knew there would be jobs in." She says she chose Niagara College because it would be an easy commute from Fort Erie.

"We had to put in a lot of hours in completing our assignments."

VanOsch says she really enjoyed the program. It was construction based and taught her specific skills, such as manual drafting, and gave her an introduction to computer drafting and a number of aspects of land surveying.

"There was a real bond among the students, and the instructors were very dedicated to the program," she says.

VanOsch is now working for Matthews Cameron Heywood — Kerry T. Howe Surveying Ltd., in Niagara Falls, as a computer draftsperson.

She began at the company in May 1997 right after graduation. VanOsch says she worked for the company during the summer between her second and third years of school, and these summer positions helped her get the job after graduation.

VanOsch says she and a few other students were chosen for the summer position. Since the company's management was aware of her graduation time, they phoned her for an interview at the end of her last year of school.

VanOsch's duties include drafting subdivisions and doing surveyors' property reports. She says she enjoys drafting subdivisions the most.

She outlines what her job entails. A developer will come to the company with an idea for a new subdivision. She then researches the guidelines and bylaws laid out by the city for that area and comes up with a draft, which incorporates the developer's ideas and the area's bylaws. She incorporates the concepts into a registered plan, after which the developer can purchase the lot.

> ***'I was always interested in architecture.'***
> ***— Denise VanOsch***

VanOsch says she had a hand in creating the Meadow Creek Phase II subdivision, located off Connell Avenue in Niagara Falls. She says she also works on hotel renovations and additions, including the recent ones made to the Skyline Foxhead Hotel in Niagara Falls.

As for the future, VanOsch says, "I'm not sure, but I don't see anything in the near future of me leaving (the company). I'm here for a while."

VanOsch is looking forward to her wedding this year and says she is happy in her present position.

March of Dimes offers DesignAbility to benefit those with physical disabilities

Volunteers design products to meet needs

By CRAIG STRATYCHUK
Staff Writer

Thanks to a small group of volunteers, people who are physically disabled are a few steps closer to leading a normal life.

The Ontario March of Dimes, a charitable organization dedicated to delivering a wide range of programs and services that enhance the lives of people with physical disabilities, has opened a Niagara region chapter of the program called DesignAbility.

The program bring a group of volunteers together to separately or collectively design and construct products that meet the needs of the people who require them.

Staff Representative Lorraine Pelrine, who then selected others around the Niagara area to join the program, set the South Region DesignAbility program up about one year ago. Other chapters of the same program are in Hamilton and Kitchener.

The Niagara chapter has successfully completed 15 projects, including small ones like blocks placed under tables to raise the height, or something as big as a wire-controlled smoking arm with moving parts to best accommodate the user.

ONTARIO MARCH OF DIMES / LA MARCHE DES DIX SOUS DE L'ONTARIO

The Ontario March of Dimes, a charitable organization dedicated to delivering a wide range of programs and services . . .

DesignAbility volunteers have created many useful items, such as a portable, adjustable foot rest for a college student, and a customized ramp for a retiree to help him get into his recliner on his own.

Pelrine says the ideas for the devices come mostly from the people who need them. Advertisements are placed in local newspapers around the region, calling for those in need to contact the DesignAbility program and explain their ideas. From there, the group assesses the ideas and starts work on the project.

Pelrine says the products the DesignAbility program constructs are not sold to the user. Instead, "clients are asked to provide money for the costs of the materials," says Pelrine.

Members of the community needing specialized devices are encouraged to contact the Niagara chapter of DesignAbility to discuss their needs.

Volunteers from the Niagara region are also encouraged to contact the chapter to express their thoughts and input into creating or joining in the action.

CALLING ALL BANDS

The Niagara News is now taking bookings for bands interested in a profile in our music feature

"Riding the Riff IV"

to be published **March 24, 2000.**

Qualifications:

- Be local band/musician
- Be available for a photo/interview ASAP
- Have a CD to promo
- Pay $25 fee to guarantee entry

Interested bands/advertisers call:

735-2211 ext.7748

CAMPUS COVERAGE

College radio station on 90.1 FM

By MONICA PALINIEWICZ
Staff Writer

The Broadcasting — Radio, Television and Film (BRTF) program students are "progressing well" with FM radio station 90.1 FM CRNC (Campus Radio Niagara College).

The recent change of the college station's broadcast frequency from 90.7 FM to 90.1 FM was required because CBC 99.1 FM in Southern Ontario rebroadcasts the signal at 90.5 FM, causing reception conflicts with the original college frequency.

"The in-house radio station was aired just at the Welland campus and (only to) certain areas of the campus. The Voyageur wing probably got most of the sound system but there were several areas that couldn't hear anything, like the Merritt wing for example," says Bruce Ashford, engineer for the station.

The radio station has "very good reception in the immediate college area (and can be) heard for several blocks."

"I've actually gone down to Niagara Street and picked it up really well," says Ashford. "We can actually be heard as far as Highway 20 by Rice Road. It does have quite a range but, unfortunately, there are some areas where you can't pick it up just because of the way the transmitter works."

When the radio broadcasts started, CRNC "started with one watt but now has moved up to three."

"We hope, through whatever we're allowed to do through the college, to maybe get some kind of tower or higher antennae to have a better reception. Height is key."

> *'. . . when you put a radio station on, it's a huge job to program it right . . .'*
>
> *— Ron Tufts*

Currently, 90.1 FM CRNC airs weekdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m, One of the programs the students offer is called Cover This.

"Students, during the allotted Cover This time slot, play cover versions done by other artists," said Ashford.

Ron Tufts, a Broadcasting professor, said, "We're going to be putting together a listening guide, once all is established as to when the shows air. It's going to kind of be like a TV Guide."

The Canadian Radio, Television and Telecommunications Commission has licensed developmental stations, specifically for small communities, including colleges and universities, that don't have access to their own radio station.

"With developmental licenses, you use the license for three years and at the end of three years, you can then reapply for a full-fledged community radio license," said Tufts. "If you don't apply, you lose your license and it becomes void. Right now, we're just learning to understand the regulations and, once we understand them, we'll put in an application."

Dave Atkinson, 21, of Leamington, Ont., is the program director of the station and a third-year radio broadcasting student.

Atkinson's duties include control of who's on air and at what time, co-ordinating specialty shows and being in charge of all the department heads.

"Right now we've got a jazz/blues fusion show, a hip-hop show, and a couple of people want to do a spoken word news show," says Atkinson. "We want to get into foreign language programming as well. Basically, anything (is possible), just so everyone can listen to it and associate with at least one show."

The shows will tentatively run between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m., after the regular broadcast.

Atkinson said, "If anybody wants to be involved with this, they can. They don't have to be in our program. All they have to do is write a half-page proposal and we will try and get them on air as soon as possible, after training."

To contact Atkinson, call (905) 734-8161.

Tufts said; "We're just trying to get the word out now. We're really still just in the testing stage because when you put a radio station on, it's a huge job to program it right, to get all the elements together, but it's working out nicely. We hope to have it fully together by September 2000."

MMC tourism, hospitality library making changes

By JENNIFER MAGO
Staff Writer

The Maid of the Mist Centre campus (MMC), in Niagara Falls, includes a small but important Learning Resource Centre (LRC).

"We're a special library in that we only have material that pertains to the hospitality and touring industries," said Sandy Szeman, supervising technician of the LRC.

The LRC's tourism area is maintained jointly by the tourism department of the college and the library. "We both contribute material."

Although the tourism materials don't circulate there is a casual area where students can work with the material.

Filing cabinets have brochures filed by country, including a large collection from Canada and the United States.

"We try to order new brochures every other year from all the States."

All of the periodicals focus on hospitality and tourism. Videos are available, and the LRC has a designated area where students may view them.

"We have a lot of people come in from industries to borrow our videos and some periodicals because they're special and they're not really available in other areas," said Szeman.

> *'I think what we're able to give more of is individual attention, possibly more than at the other campuses.'*
>
> *— Sandy Szeman*

The LRC also includes a collection of circulating books, located in a breakfast area. The breakfast section contains only information about breakfast foods. The breakfast collection may appear small but in comparison to those held by larger libraries, it is extensive. The LRC includes research databases duplicating "mostly" everything at the college's other LRCs.

"We have a few CD rooms, which, unfortunately, aren't loaded currently because we just got a new tower."

The LRC recently received a new laser printer. "It works great," Szeman said, adding it is quieter and quicker, which means less waiting. The printer is a Lexmark printer and was donated by the Information Services Department. "We're improving slowly, taking baby steps."

The LRC doesn't have group study rooms, but there are table areas for students.

"The MMC is currently planning for expansions that would include the LRC area, because we have concerns like that."

Szeman said she feels they've outgrown their space.

Some of the LRC space was given up, cutting space by one-third, so students could have an open access lab.

"We're growing and that's good," said Szeman.

The LRC may be smaller than LRCs at the other campuses, but its staff of two, Szeman and Janet Holden, part-time technician, see a positive side to it.

"I think what we're able to give more of is individual attention, possibly more than at the other campuses."

Szeman said she feels they're able to get to know their clientele better because it's a small campus.

Staff operates on a first-name base with students more often than may be possible on other campuses.

"We (the facilities) are well used, and our videos, in particular, get a lot of use, as do our research databases."

Szeman said since the arrival of the new printer the databases are "really taking off."

The library includes a new centre for special needs students. The special needs department is responsible for financing and setting up the resources there. These might include a program that will read tests to students who have learning disabilities.

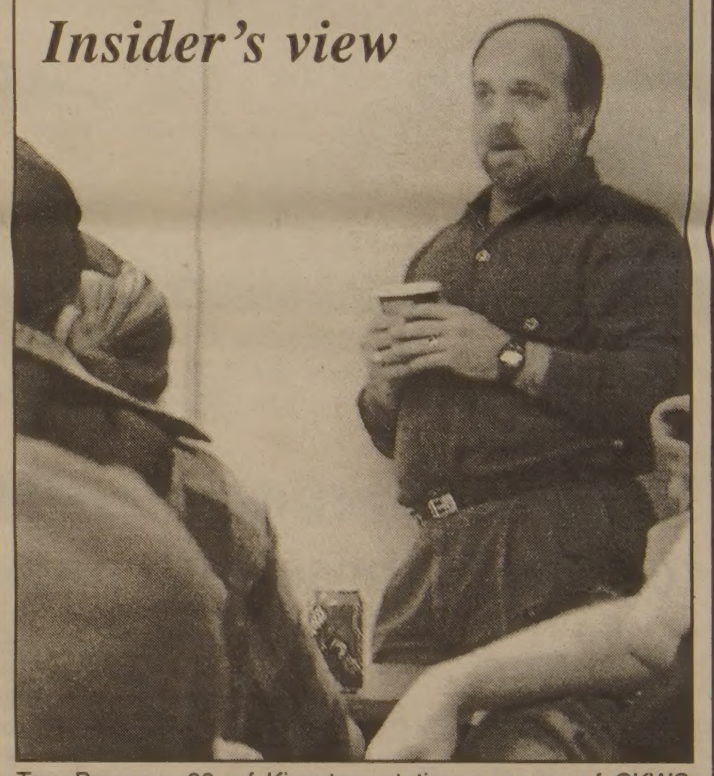
If the community would like to come in and use supplies, they are welcome, said Szeman, adding if they want to take things out, a community users card is needed.

Szeman said with just two staff members they are sometimes "stretched" by their workload, but if they work as a team they can provide the necessary services.

"I think we're able to provide the services the students need even though we have a small staff."

The Maid of the Mist Centre LRC is open weekdays 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Insider's view

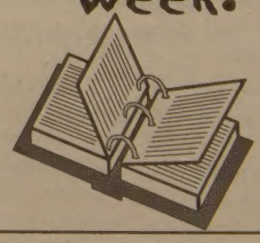


Tom Brennon, 39, of Kingston, station manager of CKWS Kingston Television, is a graduate of Niagara College's Broadcasting – Radio, Television and Film (BRTF) program. He spoke to second-year BRTF students on Feb. 4 about television production, broadcasting issues and the hiring practices at his station.

Photo by Sam Bayly

Get ready for your mid-term evaluations!

They're coming next week.



WINTER FUN

Winterfest celebrates cold, blustery days

Hamilton's Winterfest allows people to enjoy winter

By MONICA PALINIEWICZ
Staff Writer

For 22 years, the city of Hamilton has been celebrating these cold, blustery days with Winterfest.

Paul Plummer, chief organizer of the event, says Winterfest was made possible through "sponsorships."

The Hamilton Bulldogs, the city's hockey team, The Hamilton Spectator newspaper and radio station 102.9 K-Lite FM all donated money and services for this year's Winterfest.

"With the Spectator, they let us run $12,000 worth of ads and with K-Lite FM, they also let us run advertisements worth $12,000 for the event," says Plummer.

The Hamilton Bulldogs offered a lucky citizen a "night with the Bulldogs." The winner of the contest drops the puck for the night's game.

Children and families alike enjoy a winter ride in a horse-drawn wagon during Hamilton's Winterfest.

Photo by Monica Paliniewicz

Hamilton's Winterfest allows people of all ages to join in some "winter fun" with various events and games.

Robert Winniger and David Clifford, of Rockford, Ont., put on a display representing the West Field Heritage Village.

"We are here to tell people of the first settler in Hamilton and the history of this area, going back to the 1600s," said Winniger. "We discuss the fur trade and how maple syrup was discovered and let people sample some freshly made syrup. We also allow the children to try on armour, similar to what was worn in the 1600s."

Both men got into the spirit of Winterfest by dressing in period costumes. Winniger dressed the part of LaSalle, the first to settle in Hamilton, and Clifford dressed the part of a French missionary.

Other events included horse-drawn wagon rides, family winter hikes, a snow shoeing challenge, a family snowman building contest, lumberjack games and a children's activity centre with B. J. the Clown, for the younger ones.

> ***'We are here to tell people of the first settler in Hamilton and the history of this area, going back to the 1600s'***
> ***— Robert Winniger***

Winners of the contests received prizes such as Winterfest sweatshirts, pins and key chains.

With participants of many ages, including many children, Hamilton produced a fun and successful event for the first Winterfest of the century.

Pennsylvania's ski resorts family friendly

By CRAIG STRATYCHUK
Staff Writer

It's not just for honeymooners anymore.

Finally, an alternative to winter vacationing outside Ontario exists, without the expenses involved in skiing the mountains of Quebec.

Just an eight-hour drive from Toronto lies Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains. Pennsylvania is ranked as the third largest ski-state in the east, and its resorts offer several spring break ski and snowboarding packages.

The Poconos have seven major ski hills and five resorts, all fully ski- and snowboard-friendly.

Kelly Ruddick, of the Pocono Mountains Vacation Bureau, calls the resorts "family friendly," but they still have the party atmosphere that vacationing students long to find.

Jack Frost Ski Area, in Lake Harmony, Pa., offers full accommodation packages starting at just $65 US, and includes lodging, lift tickets, rentals and outdoor paintball packages.

All visitors have access to skiing, snowboarding and skating.

Camelback Ski Area is the largest skiing facility in the Poconos. Camelback has 33 trails, 13 lifts and two high-speed quads. Camelback has won five silver medals for snow quality, grooming, challenge and accessibility. Packages include rentals and lessons, starting at $60 US.

Pennsylvania offers a package called Passport to $aving$. Many discounts are given through Passport to $aving$, such as 27 Canadian-dollar-at-par offers, more than 100 accommodations discounts of 10 to 15 per cent off regular rates, admission to attractions and meal and shopping discounts.

The slopes in the Poconos are about the same elevation as Ontario's.

Seven state parks surround the Poconos, so hiking and snowmobiling possibilities are endless. Year-round horseback riding is available.

Philadelphia, Pa. is only a short drive from most to the Pocono resorts.

For more information call the Pocono Mountain Vacation Bureau (570) 421-5791.

Niagara Knights
Basketball Action
Friday, February 18th

Women's vs MOHAWK COLLEGE at 6:00 p.m.

Men's vs MOHAWK COLLEGE at 8:00 p.m.

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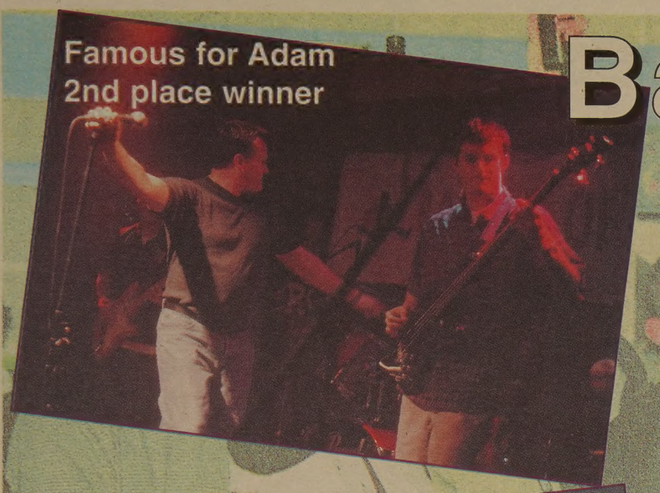
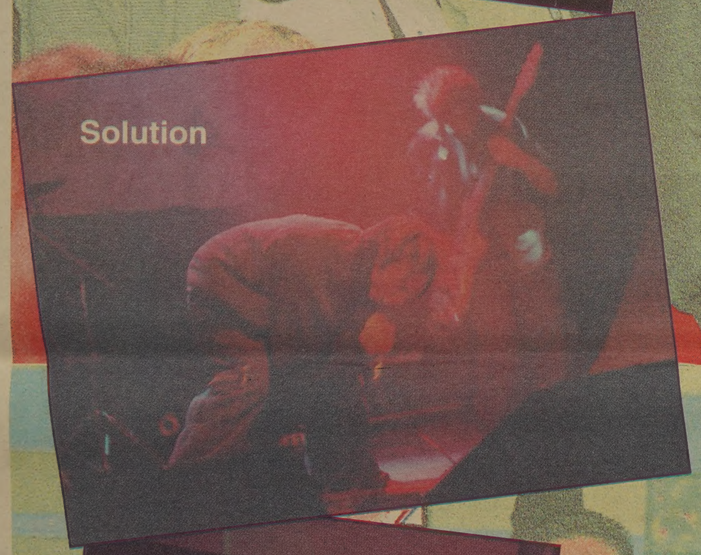
Battle of the Bands 2000

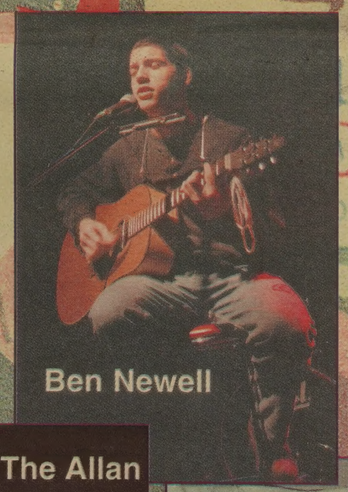

Famous for Adam
2nd place winner

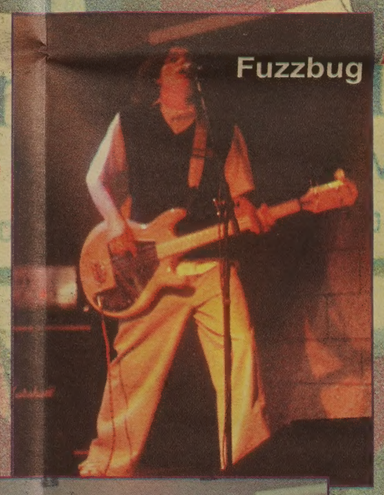
Ten Dollars Happier
1st place winner

Cumber Haze
3rd place
winner


Solution

Mudskipper


Ben Newell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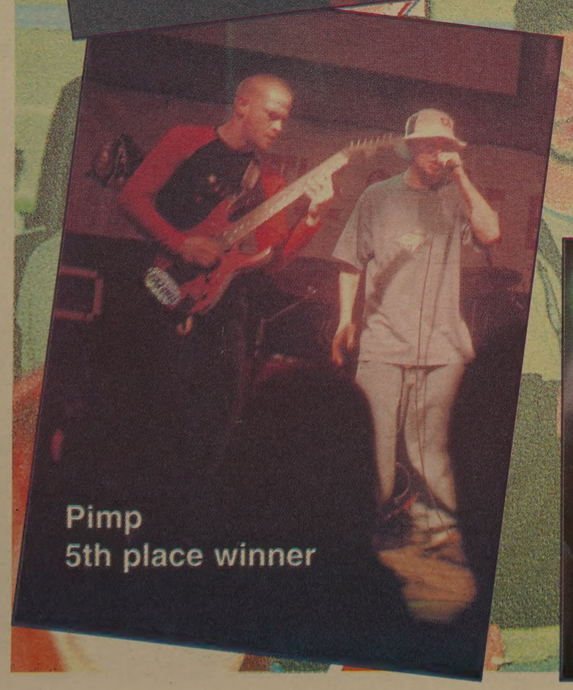
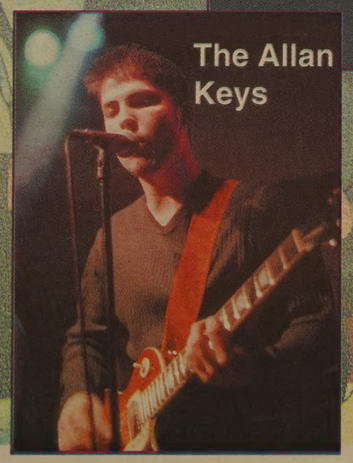

Pimp
5th place winner


The Allan
Keys

Nine in
the Sun

Screamin' Black Cadillacs
4th place winner

Photos by
Leigh Beihl, Mike Dilts and
Mark Garrett

In The Community

Tim Hortons hosts winter sportsfest

By SHANNON PALOMAKI
Staff Writer

Don't use winter as an excuse to not get out and have fun because Tim Hortons Sportsfest Tournaments are on their way.

The events and tournaments will begin on Feb. 24 and run until Feb. 27 in Port Colborne.

Tournaments include sno-golf, Molson sno-pitch, sno-volleyball, a bench press competition, three-on-three basketball, paintball, euchre and Scrabble World War III.

Some of the special events include a children's dance and party with laser lights and a smoke show at the Legion Hall. Admission for the dance and party is $5, which includes free Tim Bits, hot chocolate, pizza and pop. The party will start at 4:30 p.m. and last until 7 p.m.

There will be free swimming at Centennial pool on Feb. 26 from 1:15 p.m. to 3 p.m. and free skating at the West Side Arena on Feb. 27 from 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

See the stage musical Oklahoma! in the Lakeshore High School Auditorium on Janet Street on Feb. 19, 20, 26 and 27 and March 3, 4, and 5 at 8 p.m. Admission is $14. For more information call Ed at 834-6145.

Registration for the sno-golf tournament at Whiskey Run Golf Course is at noon. The entry fee is $12 per person.

All participants will receive a T-shirt in the three-on-three basketball at Port High on Feb. 26 and 27. The slam-dunk and three-point shoot-out is open to males and females ages nine to adult, with recreational and competitive divisions. The entry fee for a team of four is $80.

Proceeds from both events will support the Big Sisters Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing girls throughout the community with an opportunity for optimal growth and social development through a friendship with someone she can trust. Any woman over 18 years old who can share a few hours a week with a child in need can call Big Sisters at (905) 732-2341.

The Molson sno-pitch is at the sports complex. Entry fee is $140 a team, and includes two free pitchers of refreshments. For more information on sno-pitch, call 835-2901 extension 112.

The entry fee for sno-volleyball on Feb. 26 is $60 for a team of six, which should include two females.

The bench press competition is at G&M Fitness Health Club in Port Colborne Mall on Feb. 27. The entry fee is $10 contestants are asked to weigh in at 2 p.m. For more information, contact Gino Spada at 834-0550.

Prudhommes Landing — Indoor Field will be the scene for three- and five-man teams in amateur and pro levels of paintball on Feb. 26 and 27. All proceeds will be donated to the Canadian Cancer Society. For more information, contact Tim Smith at 685-6145.

A Mayor's Cup municipal hockey tournament for invited teams only will be held as well as a sport celebrity dinner sponsored by the Jaycees. Dinner will include special guest speakers, including former National Hockey League star Dennis Hull.

Tickets are available at Boggio Pharmacy and cost $50 each. There will be door prizes and a sport celebrity auction.

All proceeds will go to Port Colborne Minor Sports. For more information, contact Donnie Edwards at 834-3514 or Bill Steele at 834-4483.

Sponsors of the Sportsfest include Canadian Tire, Molson Canadian, Rose City Dodge Chrysler Ltd., Newstalk 610 CKTB, Hull and Veres Chrysler, Light 105.7 FM, Leader and 97.7 HTZ FM.

Anyone interested in participating in any of the events or tournaments can pick up a team entry form at all local Tim Hortons.

NRP firing range set to open in December

By TRACEY ALLISON
Staff Writer

The police firing range at Niagara College's Welland campus is expected to open in December 2000.

The Police Training building, which has been under discussion for three years, will be located just north of the Mackenzie building. A tender call generated eight responses. The bids were opened on Feb. 9.

The Niagara Regional Police Service (NRP) is responsible for the funding, which is "under the estimated value of the bid," said Chief Grant Waddell. He said they chose Welland campus because it was the most economical way to partner with the college. "We have tremendous assistance from them," he said. Other reasons, he explained, are that it is a central location within the peninsula, the cost for taxpayers is reduced, and "the relationship with young people is significantly advanced."

'The relationship with young people is significantly advanced.'

— Grant Waddell

The building will consist of a fire training range, space for force training use, defensive tactics training, state-of-the-art video production.

Still under negotiation is whether Niagara College's students will be able to use the building, Director of the School of Justice Studies Nancy Cain said.

"Students are constantly involved with the NRP. Students are sometimes utilized by the NRP for placement." She said currently police officers from Waterloo, Guelph and Hamilton are training here on campus, and some students are going through a selection process by the officers to use the facilities. It is called the Behavioural Interviewing course.

Cain said the NRP has always been "very supportive" of initiatives for student field placements.

She said having the training unit on campus "gives opportunities to students" they wouldn't otherwise have. "It gives them a realistic perspective of what the life of a police officer is like."

Cain said the facility will benefit the college. "It is a huge benefit for the college to have a partnership with the NRP."

PR grad returns to Niagara College

Meagen Davies, a 1999 graduate of the Public Relations (Post-graduate) program, speaks to this year's PR students, on Feb. 3. Davies is the community relations representative in the Corporate Communications department at the Tim Hortons head office in Oakville.

Photo by Cassandra Simons

Niagara Chapter of Native Women presents...

"STATUS OF NATIVE WOMEN IN CANADA"

Special guest speaker Marilyn Buffalo, president, Native Women's Association of Canada

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DIVERSITY

Respect, equality, diversity erase discrimination

Canadian youth fight with their Elimination of Racial Discrimination campaign to have their voices heard

By MONICA PALINIEWICZ
Staff Writer

For more than a decade, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination campaign has mobilized Canadian youth to make their voices heard in the fight against racism.

Respect, Equality, Diversity —these are three fundamental Canadian values driving the March 21 campaign.

The annual campaign aims to make Canadians aware that racism exists in Canada and to inspire each of us to take action against racial discrimination.

In 1960, in Sharpeville, South Africa, peaceful demonstrators against apartheid were killed.

In 1966, the United Nations declared March 21 as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Canada was one of the first countries to show its support. In 1989, the first Canadian March 21 campaign was held.

On March 3, 2000, some of the hottest musical acts in the world are coming to Ottawa to perform at the International Stop Racism Concert and Awards show, at the Corel Centre.

Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and the Status of Women, the Honourable Hedy Fry, announced the stellar line-up of internationally acclaimed artists. It includes teen icons The Moffats; Dubmatique, the group that is "raising the standards for francophone rap in North America"; Deborah Cox, Canada's own diva of rhythm and blues; Billboard chart-topper Monica; Big Sugar, one of Canada's most popular acts and platinum album sellers; and Allakomi, the traditional West African song-and-dance family group.

Fry says, "As part of the Racism. Stop it!

> ***'This event will bring young people together in an atmosphere of understanding, acceptance and respect for the next generation . . .'***
> ***— Hedy Fry***

Action 2000 initiative, this concert and awards show will entertain and captivate youth around the globe through an eclectic mix of music and technology.

"This event will bring young people together in an atmosphere of understanding, acceptance and respect for the next generation to create a world where all people can co-exist in peace."

In addition to the electrifying live performances, powerful sentiments will be delivered to the concert and awards show audience from world youth, dignitaries and celebrities such as comedian Bill Cosby and singer Sarah McLachlan via videotaped messages.

The bilingual show will subsequently be televised on March 21.

"On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to thank the artists who will participate in the concert and awards show, as well as our dedicated corporate and community partners," said Fry. "Their support not only makes this concert possible but demonstrates their commitment to the elimination of racial discrimination in Canada and around the world."

School boards aid students with learning disabilities

By TARA PUPURA
Staff Writer

For parents with children who have learning disabilities and feel as if they have nowhere to turn, help is available from the school boards.

Michael Riordon, special education program officer of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, spoke at a meeting of the Parent Support Program for Learning Disabilities Association Niagara on Feb. 10, at Eastdale Secondary School in Welland.

"The most important message that I have is this: Problem solving begins at school and ends with student success," said Riordon.

Regulation 181/98, a relatively new set of standards enforced by the ministry of education and training, requires those pupils with "exceptional needs" be provided with special education programs and services by their school board.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRCs) were explained and discussed at the meeting.

> ***'All the paperwork in the world isn't going to matter if we lose sight of the student.'***

The IEP is a written plan of action that identifies a student's strengths and needs, indicates and monitors growth, is developed with early consultation with the parent(s) and is a working document that can be adjusted as necessary.

Before an IEP is deemed necessary a student with special needs must be identified as having those needs. Riordon said next to parents, teachers are the "best" observers of children.

The new legislation outlines the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved including parents, who now are part of the IEP and IPRC programs for the first time.

The program involves a cyclical process: gather information, set the direction, develop the plan, implement it and review and update it.

IPRCs are meetings that occur up to two times in a school year. The purpose is to set a committee of three people. One must be a principal, or supervisory officer, who will identify a child's needs according to definitions provided by the ministry, decide on a placement and review the child's progress.

Parents have the right to stop an IPRC from occurring but often, said Riordon, one isn't necessary if the education plan is working for a child.

The process occurs repeatedly until it is no longer needed, such as when a student goes on to college or has solved the difficulty.

The ministry commissioned the publication of an IEP handbook to be used by every school board.

Holding up the volume, Riordon said,

> ***'From our perspective, the booklet was the most important part of the implementation of new programs.'***

"From our perspective, the booklet was the most important part of the implementation of new programs. All the paperwork in the world isn't going to matter if we lose sight of the student."

If you have questions about what is provided through the boards of education, speak to your child's teacher, who will direct you to the proper channels.

Touching lives through music with God

God helps new singer reach his dreams and touch lives through his music

By TRACEY ALLISON
Staff Writer

Chris Wilken said his strong inspiration from God helps him touch many lives through his music.

"Music has had my interest since I was 12 years old," said Wilken, 37, of Syracuse, N.Y.

He first went to college to study electronic engineering. "Through a series of unforeseen events, electronics turned to telecommunications and after that self-employment."

Wilken has been a self-employed telecommunications specialist for the past seven years. "My self-employment has lent itself greatly to my musical endeavours. My hours are erratic and flexible."

He admitted that to perform a mid-day luncheon or to travel and set up for a Friday evening coffeehouse would be nearly impossible if he were employed by someone else. "I feel God has blessed me with this situation."

After marrying Laura Allison, his wife, he said his career began to occupy his time, and music lost its importance. "I played very little until 1989." This was the year, he said, he first heard a contemporary Christian artist named Micheal Card. "His song content and style enlightened me to a whole new genre of music."

Attending church and his belief in Jesus Christ are what made him interested in spiritual things. "The discovery of music with purpose inspired me to get out my guitar, pad and pencil, and begin writing songs with Christian content."

> ***'Performing in the Christian context is a very complex and challenging task.'***

Wilken said he has been composing music since he learned to play his first song.

Wilken has since become a Christian singer, songwriter and performer. "Performing in the Christian context is a very complex and challenging task." He chooses to use biblical reference and scriptural lyrics to help "better convey the good news message."

Wilken, who musically calls himself Messenger, said he began playing at prisons, jails, rehabilitation centres and some senior homes. He notices people "benefit" from the truths of the gospel. He then began to see his songs touch people's lives.

This quiet, six-foot, dark-haired artist has played concerts at coffeehouses, conferences, banquets, fairs, and festivals, on live radio and local television, and at youth events and weddings. "Anywhere there is a stage and a microphone, plug me in."

He has recorded 40 songs, completed one album and has three albums on the way called: Press On, The Great Commission, and The Prodigal.

"My greatest influence is Jesus of Nazareth." Wilken noted that those he admires and who have most influenced him are "one in the same, those devoted to the cause of Christ."

Although Wilken finds the melody is usually the easier part to write than lyrics, his lyrics are what spread the word of God and touch so many hearts.

"Melody is the canvas of the song's picture. Tempo and style add colours, and the lyrics are details only few notice. Together they create the painting. Enjoyable at a distance, but you gain appreciation upon careful study."

Wilken strongly emphasized that although he is proud of his music and its accomplishments, he is "most proud" of his family, his wife and his three children.

"I am proud of them because they are the

> ***'Melody is the canvas of the song's picture. Tempo and style add colours, and the lyrics are details only few notice. Together they create the painting. Enjoyable at a distance, but you gain appreciation upon careful study.'***

living out of the songs I sing." Although Wilken dreams of bigger and broader stages for his music, he is content singing locally while he enjoys his family.

"I feel called and so I answer by being persistent and patient . . . preparing me for what He has called me for, to be His messenger."

BOWLING FOR BUCKS

Bowling fund-raiser will help augment United Way funding for Big Brothers

By MIKE DILTS
Staff Writer

Benefit your community by bowling for Big Brothers.

On March 4 at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m., Big Brothers is holding a fund-raiser, Bowl for Kids' Sake, to raise $20,000. The special event will be held at Bowl-O-Rama, 968 Niagara St. in Welland.

"The event is to help raise money for this non-profit organization," said Greg Whelan, 46, an executive director of Big Brothers. "Our local United Way used to supply us with all funds that we needed to run the organization, but as more and more organizations required United Way funding, United Way couldn't realistically supply all the funds we needed."

Three games of bowling are paid for by the Big Brothers. Each game will be played differently. For one game, players must use only their right hand, then one game with only the left hand, and the final game by throwing the bowling ball from between their legs.

Participants who raise money in pledges can win an assortment of prizes depending on their final

Jason Huygaests (left), 20, of Welland, a second-year Broadcasting – Radio, Television and Film program student at Niagara College at the Welland campus, and a Big Brother, plays a game of pool with his Little Brother, Kevin Walsh, 16, a student at Notre Dame High School in Welland, at the Big Brothers' office in the Seaway Mall.

Photo by Mike Dilts

totals. Anybody who raises $3,000 or more can win airfare and hotel stay for two in Las Vegas for four nights.

The money raised pays for Big Brothers' operating costs, including office rent, program delivery, the four staff members who evaluate the Big and Little Brothers' compatibility, and all the programs they offer.

The United Way provides Big Brothers with just under 40 per cent of its funding needs. Big Brothers raises the rest through events such as bowling, golf, slo-pitch, bingo and lotto break-open tickets.

"We need to raise, by ourselves, $80,000 each year," said Whelan. "United Way supplies us with just under $54,000, so our budget is over $100,000."

Whelan said it's all about money. "You need money to keep the program going."

This event is sponsored by Sunquest Vacations, Toronto Dominion Bank Financial Group, Club Richelieu International and M.T. Bellies.

"This event is to raise money and awareness," said Whelan. "There are 39 kids who don't have a big brother."

Big Brothers' offices are at the Seaway Mall at 800 Niagara St., Welland.

PERSPECTIVES

Four-month job search finally ends

Student's search for work pays off in the end – literally

By JAMIE WHITE
Staff Writer
Column

In the Nov. 26 edition of Niagara News, I wrote a column about my difficulties trying to find a job.

I described my work experience at some pretty pitiful jobs, such as at a truck stop restaurant and at a steel factory.

With no money left, I was depending on my parents for support. I had moved here for my last year of school and didn't think finding a job would be that much of a problem. I was wrong.

After a four-month search, though, I am very happy to say I now have a job.

My luck began to improve — somewhat — when I applied for a job at Aldo Shoes Inc., at the Pen Centre in St. Catharines. I was hired as Christmas help with a possibility of staying on permanently.

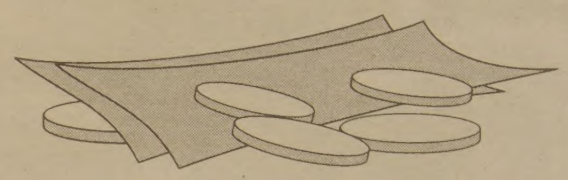
I worked a three-and-a-half-hour training shift, and I thought it went well.

Before accepting this position at Aldo, I had applied to Canadian Tire Acceptance Ltd. I hadn't heard anything from them, so I decided Aldo was where I would work.

After my training shift at Aldo, I began to see the true colours of the company. Being how it was close to Christmas, I figured I'd be working quite a bit. I was disappointed though, when I was only scheduled one shift for two weeks after my training shift. An hour before I was to be at work for this shift, the assistant manager called me and told me they'd over scheduled and I wasn't needed to come in.

During these weeks of waiting for work from Aldo, I was called for an interview for Canadian Tire Acceptance Ltd., and got the job, so I quit at Aldo.

In a professional manner, I told the assistant manager that I had been offered a position with Canadian Tire and I would be accepting the offer.



So what's my beef with Aldo?

They still haven't paid me for my training shift. I was first told I would receive a cheque, instead of direct deposit, which could be picked up in two weeks.

I waited the two weeks. The assistant manager told me it had not arrived and I would have to bring in a void cheque for direct deposit after all.

This was right before I went home for Christmas. It was at least a week before I returned to Welland and to the store with a void cheque. When I turned in my cheque, the assistant manager told me, in two weeks I would receive my pay.

Two weeks later, I checked my bank account. No money. I called the store to find out why. Again, I spoke with the assistant manager. She told me mail to the head office was backed up and I would receive my pay in another two weeks.

Two weeks later again, I called to inquire why my pay hadn't been deposited. This time I spoke with the manager. She informed me that my hours had yet to be confirmed. She also mentioned that it was recorded that I cancelled my second shift.

You can imagine my anger. I told her the shift was cancelled on me!

She told me she would call the head office and call me back with an answer the following Monday.

I was told the cheque was being mailed to the store. It wasn't.

At this point, I involved my mother, who made some demanding calls on my behalf.

I worked the training shift at the end of November. It is now the middle of February. I feel this was a ridiculous amount of time to wait for a pay cheque.

Finally, after speaking with the head office myself, Aldo couriered the cheque to my home.

Despite all this mess with Aldo, I am really enjoying my position as a customer service representative for Canadian Tire's Options MasterCard. I think Canadian Tire is a great company to work for and I am really enjoying it.

And, yes, Canadian Tire has paid me!

Summer to remember at Camp Walden

By SHANNON PALOMAKI
Staff Writer
Column

Look no further for a summer job and total summer-camp experience.

Located 20 minutes outside Bancroft, Ont., and two hours from Ottawa, is Camp Walden.

For three months of my summer holidays Ted and Elaine Cole, owners of Camp Walden, employed me. Walden is a summer camp for children up to the ages of 16. Children participate in water and land sports, plays and other activities that lead to their having many friends by the end of the summer.

For a salary of just under $3,000 I worked as part of the kitchen staff with 11 others.

Food was provided, as were lodgings. Seven girls and I shared two bathrooms and four bunk beds.

This, to me, was an experience of a lifetime. I not only gained various degrees of experience but valuable friendships too.

The kitchen staff worked two shifts. Every morning we would wake up, eat breakfast together and serve breakfast, lunch and/or dinner to the 600 campers and counsellors of the camp.

We had one day off each week when we could lie by the lake, go canoeing, water-skiing, kayaking, hiking, watch movies or participate in the various activities that went on throughout the day.

If we were lucky, we could go into town for the day and shop or just "get some air" outside of the camp.

I will never forget our head chef, Bill, who let us sneak into his cabin to watch the only two television programs we got: South Park and Dawson's Creek. Bill kept our spirits high when we got tired and was sure to give us a laugh. Then there was the baker, Rhoda, who was like our surrogate grandmother and always put us in our place when we needed it.

At the beginning of the camp season, all the staff were taken into Renfrew and dropped off to enjoy dinner, drinks and dancing.

We were also treated to special events like movie nights, or plays put on by the campers and counsellors, and we were even invited into the owner's immaculate cabin for some treats.

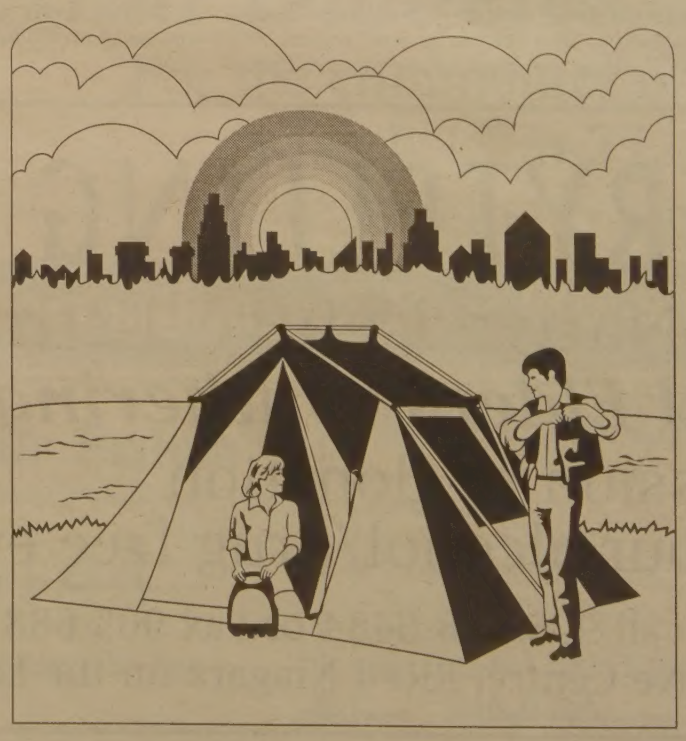
The best time of the day would be just after dinner when I could sit alone on the dock and watch the sun fall below the horizon while the crickets sang and the wind whistled through the trees. The sky was lit by amazingly bright stars and I witnessed my first shooting star.

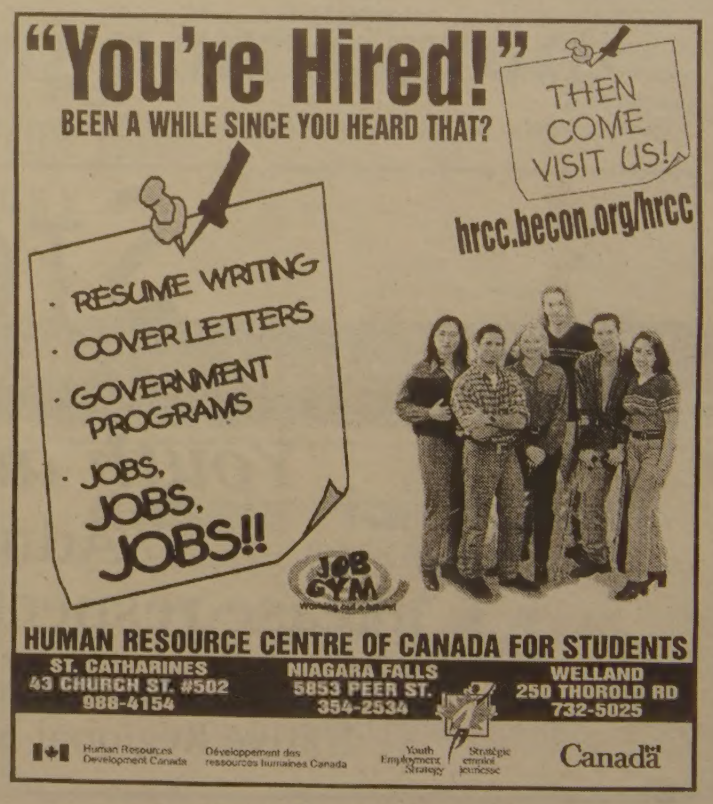
At night, once the children were asleep, the staff would join for sing-alongs, games and special guests.

When Camp Walden ended, Camp Madawaska, a volleyball camp, began. Our job was much the same except at night we pumped kegs of beer for the counsellors. Near the end of Camp Madawaska, we had a volleyball tournament, at which we sent out 20 minutes away for "real food": McDonald's!

Anyone looking to get away for two months, gain experience and earn money should head to Niagara College's Employment Services offices. Camp Walden offers an information package. Fill out an application and bring a résumé.

It will be a summer to remember.





ENTERTAINMENT

DiCaprio stars in action movie The Beach

Weather problems on the set of The Beach couldn't stop production

By SHANNON PALOMAKI
Staff Writer

A storm of controversy was brewing on the set of DiCaprio's new film, The Beach.

Set on an island in Thailand, the movie concerns Richard's (Leonardo DiCaprio) search for "something different."

Richard persuades a couple he'd met to join him in his search. They risk their lives by swimming across the open sea, crawling past armed guards and jumping from the top of a 120-foot waterfall on a quest to find a secret island. Richard had heard about this island paradise on earth from another traveller.

Once they reach their destination, a small community of travellers living in secret welcomes them.

The paradise dream soon becomes a nightmare as Richard becomes witness to an incident of bloodshed. Now Richard's only goal is to leave the secret beach, but someone doesn't want the location of the secret island to be revealed and is willing to defend it to the death.

The Beach co-stars Virginie Ledoyen as Francoise and Guillaume Canet as Etienne. Andrew Macdonald produces the 20th Century - Fox Figment Film. It is directed by Danny Boyle, who also directed Trainspotting and Shallow Grave. The Beach is based on a novel by Alex Garland, published in 1996.

Trying to distance the film from Lord of the Flies, to which it has been unfairly compared, Boyle said The Beach gives a feeling of being disconnected to the world of modern technology where things such as cell phones, computers and the Internet were designed to make lives more enjoyable. However, for many people, the world becomes overwhelming and leaves them with a feeling of being disconnected from the rest of the technical world.

A sea of walls and cliffs, a lagoon and white sand encloses Phi Phi Le, a small island off Phuket. Permission was needed to plant 100 coconut trees to accommodate filming. It was this planting which started protests against the filming.

Although the filmmakers put up $80,000 as damage insurance and say they acted within the law, authorities in Thailand said the Royal Forestry Department broke the law in allowing the film to be made in a national park.

While the crew was shooting the film, thousands of dollars of camera equipment was lost as a sudden storm whipped up the sea. The boat capsized, throwing DiCaprio and actress Tilda Swinton into the sea where Thai newspapers said sharks were seen to be near. A studio spokesperson said no one had ever heard of a shark attack in the area.

DiCaprio, who's breaking role was at 16 years old in the TV sitcom Growing Pains, has also starred in The Basketball Diaries, The Quick and The Dead, William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Total Eclipse, Celebrity, and The Man in the Iron Mask (said to be his worst movie to date).

DiCaprio made his movie debut at 17 years old as Robert De Niro's stepson in This Boy's Life. Although many insiders say he was robbed when he wasn't nominated for Titanic, he was nominated for an Academy Award as best supporting actor for What's Eating Gilbert Grape, in which he portrayed a mentally challenged boy.

Fame has increased DiCaprio's fortune, as his salary for a single assignment went from $2.5 million in Titanic to $20 million for The Beach.

The Beach premiered across Canada Feb. 11.

From left, Francois (Virginie Ledoyen), Richard (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Etienne (Guillaume Canet) ponder the distance they must swim to reach the secret island paradise known as "the beach."
Submitted photo by Peter Mountain

Yuk Yuk's grand opening 'excellent' in the Falls

Red hot comedians melt away the icy conditions

By MARK GARRETT
Staff Writer

Yuk Yuk's is living up to its name.

Yuk Yuk's, in Niagara Falls, opened its doors for an official grand opening on Feb. 10, although the club has been open for two months. The ceremony kicked off with wine and cheese.

The cold weather and icy conditions didn't stop a crowd of about 250 people from swarming the club.

Jenifer Cass, club manager, of Niagara Falls, says the event was "excellent."

The first comedian, Tony Bendetti, a.k.a. the Italian Stallion, says, "I'm 39 and I'm starting to feel old." He says, "This is a great club."

His interaction with the crowd and his jokes about his Italian parents drew enormous laughter from the crowd. "Opening a diaper is like opening a Kinder Surprise Egg," he told the crowd.

Mark Matthews, 38, of Niagara Falls, told about his experience driving on Highway 401. "The 401 highway scares the shit out of you." He told stories of his marriage and his car: "Car salesmen, them bastards."

His inside joke about Niagara Falls Mayor Wayne Thomson, who wasn't there because he was "arguing with Barbaro (Ron Barbaro, chairman of the Ontario Casino Corp., which oversees gambling in Ontario) over money for the casino" got a big reaction from the crowd.

Matthews is the ex-manager of Yuk Yuk's when it was at the Serbian Hall in Niagara Falls.

The last comedian, Carey Talvich, of Toronto, astonished the crowd with his hilarious act.

His rude comments and stories of funny situations stole the show. He doesn't stand very tall, but Elfis (which he calls himself) exploded with subjects ranging from politics to drugs, and sex.

Talvich had a way of weaving satire and subliminal messages into everything he said.

"I love making people laugh," he says, adding, "I'm honest, not proud."

Yuk Yuk's offers performances on Thursdays, Fridays and twice on Saturday. It is on McLeod Road in Niagara Falls.

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(This announcement compliments of Niagara News)

AROUND THE SPECTRUM

Accomplished woman returns to Niagara

By VICKI HARTLEN
Staff Writer

Furthering her education has become something of a hobby for Sarah Drabble, 24, of St. Catharines.

Drabble is a university graduate and a Niagara College graduate.

"I'm back again to finish another program," said Drabble, adding she had no idea post-secondary school would play such an important role in her life.

Drabble grew up in Barrie, Ont., with her two "loving" parents and her older sister.

"It was a happy, average and ordinary childhood."

A graduate of Innisdale Secondary School, Drabble went on to graduate from the University of Western Ontario, where she received her Bachelor of Science degree in environmental science and biology.

Wanting a more "hands-on" education, she made the decision to attend college.

"College is a more practical education."

Drabble attended Niagara College's Glendale campus and received her post-graduate certificate in ecosystem restoration.

It was during her year in the program that Drabble made her "career decision."

"I decided that I wanted to focus more on the plant side of ecology."

Drabble said that this decision was part of the reason she has returned to Niagara College.

"I'm now at the Glendale campus and I'm going through to be a horticultural technician," said Drabble. "I picked this program because I like plants."

Although the program is two years in length, she started in January 2000 and will be done in one and a half years.

'I like the fact that Niagara College has state-of-the-art equipment and greenhouses.'
— Sarah Drabble

"I came back to this college because I liked it last time," said Drabble, adding it's "OK."

"I like the fact that Niagara College has state-of-the-art equipment and greenhouses."

She said she also likes the teaching staff here.

"The teachers are pretty cool. They're easy to get along with, approachable and very knowledgeable in the areas they teach in."

As much as Drabble said she enjoys learning it's not always something that is easy to afford.

"I pay for school through OSAP (Ontario Student Assistance Program) and part-time jobs, when I can actually find one."

Drabble said that she believes everyone should try the college experience, moving away from home and living alone, at least once in their lifetime.

"It's fun. I like it. It's definitely something to experience."

Although the college life has been "fun" for Drabble, she said she'd like to believe this is her last time at school.

"I'd like to work for a nursery or in restoration work. One day I'd like to own my own native plant nursery and supply plants, native to this area, to people for their gardens or restoration projects."

Drabble said she doesn't question where the future might take her but she'd "like to stay in this area, but I'm willing to go where the jobs are."

Throughout her years in post-secondary education there's one important lesson she's learned: "Stick with it (school). Don't back down, no matter how difficult it gets. You can do it."

Wearing your seat-belt could save your life

Not wearing seat-belts has steep fines and poses dangers

By JENNIFER MAGO
Stafff Writer

Not wearing your seat-belt is against the law; it's there to save your life.

In Ontario, failure to buckle up will net you a $105 fine. If it is the driver who is charged, the driver will be assessed two demerit points. If any passengers under 16 don't war their seat-belt, the vehicle's driver will lose two points and receive the ticket. The law requiring the wearing of a seat-belt has been enforced since 1974.

Mike Gayos, provincial constable with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), said drivers, ages 25 and under, are more likely to not wear their belt.

"It's 100 times easier to hit your head without a belt," said Gayos. The most frequent excuse Gayos has heard from people is "I forgot."

"I wear mine because I was raised to do it, so it's just, like, routine," said Mandy Halliday, 20, of St. Catharines. "I just think most kids don't actually think of the consequences."

Less than one per cent of drivers aren't required to wear a belt because of medical conditions, such as having undergone a heart triple bypass. A doctor's note must be produced when they're being pulled over by enforcement officers.

The OPP is conducting more checks now. If a driver puts the belt on after seeing an officer, the driver can still be pulled over and charged.

Some drivers tend to wear the belt under their arm.

"That's wrong. It's the same as not wearing one," said Gayos. The seat-belt is designed to stop you from going forward in a crash and it is unable to do that when worn under the arm.

Belts may not prevent drivers from feeling stiff after a small bump from behind, but they will prevent drivers from hitting their head so that they can maintain control of the car. In potentially fatal accidents, belts prevent the people in the vehicle from flying out of the vehicle, or into parts of the interior, or into other passengers.

"I wear my seat-belt all the time," said Carol Ducharme. "I think it's safer. A lot of people go through windshields, plus you've got to set an example for the kids."

'They would be alive now if they were wearing their seat-belts.'
— Mike Gayos

Use of baby seats falls under the same regulations as seat-belts. Seats should be attached to the vehicle's structure by a strap at the top and, at the base, by a seat-belt.

Airbags do not replace seat-belts. The seat-belts will keep the people in the vehicle in proper position so that the airbags will protect them.

Gayos has seen fatal accidents in his three years as an OPP officer in which people under the age of 24 have died from not wearing their seat-belts.

"They would be alive now if they were wearing their seat-belts," said Gayos.

"It saves your life," said Gary Marr, 55, of Welland.

The lap belt should be worn lower than the abdomen to let your back move and flex.

"Cars are like a cocoon. It's (a seat belt) designed to save your life," said Gayos.

"I wear my seat-belt because I don't wanna die," said Jennifer Murphy, 20, of Welland.

Gayos said he feels seat-belts are important because too many people get into accidents and the incidence of injuries is a lot higher if people are not wearing their seat-belts.

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MEN'S ATHLETICS

V-ball team finishes year unbeaten at home

Kerby Bentley goes up for a tip in men's volleyball action. Bentley played his last home game of the season.

Photo by Mike Wencel

Team off to conquer the provincial championship in Belleville

By JASON VIZBULIS
Staff Writer

Playing at home was perfect for the Niagara College men's volleyball team.

Niagara downed Redeemer College of Ancaster four games to one on Feb. 10 to complete a run of nine consecutive home wins this season.

Graeme Gaunt led the way with 22 kills, a stuffed block and an ace, while Matt Piccolo had eight kills, four stuffed blocks and an ace.

The team received a scare in the fourth game when team captain Kerby Bentley turned his ankle and was on the floor for a few minutes.

Bentley said, "There is no bruising, no swelling, so it's pretty minor." Bentley didn't return to the match.

Niagara College men's volleyball coach Blair Cudmore said he was not pleased with the team.

"It was a fairly weak effort with the division locked up. It was nice of them to pull it together. Losing the first game made our team a little more intense."

The win was important to Niagara because a loss could have affected their national ranking.

"We have a national ranking of eighth, and that ranking is important for a wild card bid if we are not successful at the provincials."

The provincials started yesterday and run through Saturday at Loyalist College in Belleville. Cudmore said the team should do well.

"I think it's reasonable to finish first, if not second. I expect us to be in the gold medal match at the provincials."

Knights' player Graeme Gaunt delivers one of his 22 kills. Niagara College downed Redeemer College of Ancaster four games to one. The Knights finished the season unbeaten at home, with their only loss on the road. The team left for the provincial championships on Feb. 16.

Photo by Jason Vizbulis

Knights dominate the court

By MIKE WENCEL
Staff Writer

The Niagara College men's basketball team pulled away from the pack with a huge win over St. Clair College, of Sarnia, on Feb. 12.

A physical battle contributed to a slow start for the Knights in the first half, as they trailed by as much as seven, before coming back to lead 44-41 at the half.

"We need to maintain our basket and box out at our end of the court," said Mike Beccaria, assistant coach, commenting at halftime about the adjustments needed by Niagara to maintain the lead for the victory.

"They all have wide bodies and have an excellent weight training program," said Beccaria, adding, "That's why we had problems controlling the boards at our end of the court."

'It's an honour being at the top.'
— Ernell Ellis

Both teams came out firing, exchanging leads of seven points or less. With five minutes left to go in the second, Niagara lured St. Clair into two 30-second shot clock violations. Niagara stretched their lead to six and never looked back for an 84-83 win, bringing the team's record to seven wins and two defeats.

Ernell Ellis, the league's leading scorer with an average of 25.4 points a game, is the main reason for Niagara's success. Ellis fell short of that average only knocking in 16 points, but was still a factor at the defensive end.

"It's an honour being at the top, I don't know what else to say," said Ellis.

Basketball Knights boast league's best record, league-leading scorer

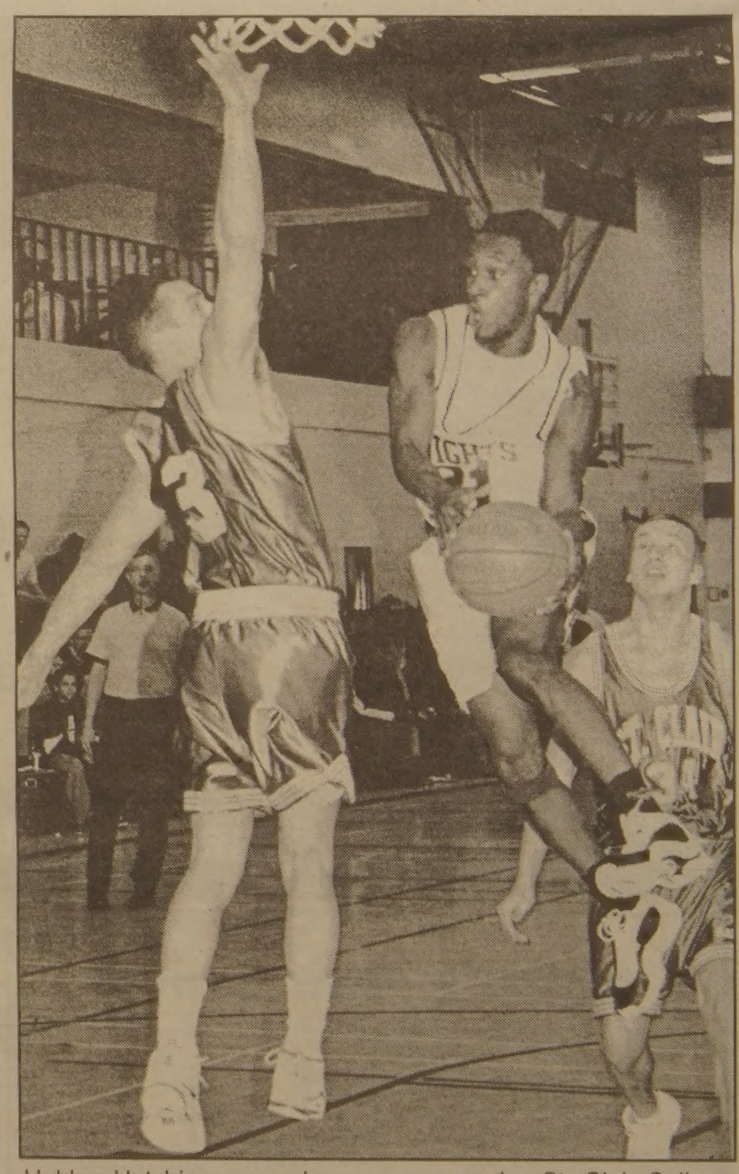
Ellis, who was speechless about being the leading scorer in the league, said if it wasn't for his teammates driving and dishing him the ball, he wouldn't know where he would be in the scoring race today.

"They always create so many lanes for me, leaving me wide open shots," said Ellis.

The Knights put in an all-round team effort as four other players scored in the double-digits in the game. Haldon Hutchinson led the Knights in scoring with 17 points, while Curtis Francis had 13 points and Kyle Handrahan and Andrew Higgins finished with 10 points each.

Asked what his final thoughts on the game were, Beccaria replied, "We had a lot of turnovers, which led to many mistakes. We just did enough to win."

Niagara's next home game is tonight against Mohawk College, of Hamilton, at the Welland campus. Game time is 8 p.m.



Haldon Hutchinson sneaks a pass around a St. Clair College defender last Saturday afternoon.

Photo by Mike Wencel

WOMEN'S ATHLETICS

Knights fall short losing 70-63 to Georgian

Candace Oxford, #5, who scored 10 points for Niagara Knights, jumping for a basket against Georgian College at Niagara College's Mackenzie building in Welland on Feb. 11.

Photo by Mike Dilts

By MIKE DILTS
Staff Writer

The Niagara Knights women's basketball team needs to play two good halves.

Niagara Knights lost to Georgian College, of Barrie, 70-63, in Niagara College's Mackenzie building gym in Welland on Feb. 11.

"The first half we played a little slow," said Georgie Groat, coach of the women's basketball team. "It really wasn't our game, but in the second half, they pulled together and did a really great job."

Niagara played a weak defensive first half, letting Georgian get five or six chances at the net in one play. Georgian was able to get a 12-point lead without being challenged.

Niagara won the second half 36 - 31.

Niagara's turn around was driven by Jennifer Boyle, who got 17 points, Tasha Warwick, who got 11 and Leighann Breault's strong, aggressive game.

Warwick, a Correction Worker program student, said the players need to work together as a team.

"We need a leader," said Warwick. "If we had a leader, everybody would follow."

The next home game is tonight against Mohawk College, of Hamilton, at 6 p.m.

Leighann Breault, #33, who scored six points for Niagara Knights, trying to outplay Georgian's defence.

Photo by Mike Dilts

Season ends with playoff loss

By MIKE WENCEL
Staff Writer

The season has ended for the Niagara College women's volleyball team, who lost to the Royal Military College (RMC) three games straight in the playoffs last weekend in Kingston.

Niagara was seeded third in the West conference, while RMC was seeded third in the East conference. Niagara lost 25-18, 25-22 and 25-23.

Carolyn Schatz, Niagara's head coach, said RMC had the home court advantage as the college had their band playing and the stands filled with fans.

"We couldn't hear ourselves when we called timeouts," said Schatz. "We were really motivated and ready to play. The girls were really pumped."

Schatz said the ceiling in the gym was "really high" and the gym had a different kind of court, to which the women had trouble adjusting.

A major problem, Schatz said, was the team's serving. As a team, Niagara only served 65 per cent the game.

"We had some errors that we didn't want to make. That was our main focus for this match."

Looking back over the season, Schatz replied: "The season went very well. The girls played with a lot of heart, and should be proud making it this far."

"They're a great bunch of girls," said Schatz.

Niagara will be losing two players, Izzy Chavez and Jenn Carpenter, both second-year players, but will have seven returning for next year. The Knights have three "good recruits" coming from western Ontario to complete next year's team, said Schatz.

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March 10/00
March 17/00
March 24/00
April 7/00
April 21/00

SPORTS

Knights defeat Redeemer

By MIKE WENCEL
Staff Writer

A roller coaster season has ended with a huge Niagara College win at home over Redeemer College to capture a playoff berth.

Diane VandenHoven, 20, a second-year player, led the Knights' offence with intensity and determination.

VandenHoven, who has been a team leader all season, finished the game with a team high of 22 kills and two service aces.

'It feels real nice winning this game.'
—Heather Richardson

The Knights, who struggled most of the season with consistency, defeated Redeemer, of Ancaster, 3-1, winning 25-12, 25-22, 23-25 and 25-18.

Heather Richardson, having her best game of the season in the setter position, set up the Knights for a total of 49 kills in the entire match.

"It feels real nice winning this game," she said, adding, "We got rid of a bunch of crap that was happening in the beginning of the season. Now everyone is playing unselfishly."

This big game for the Knights shows the women are not a team to take lightly in the playoffs. They proved this in the second half of the season, fighting back from a 2-5 record.

The Knights' current record is 6-6, placing them third in the West conference, a very respectable spot for the Knights to win a playoff game.

"It has been a satisfying experience. It shows a great deal of improvement in our program," said Carolyn Schatz, head coach.

The Knights, having qualified the past three years for the playoffs, traveled to Royal Military College, in Kingston, this past weekend, and will try to capture a championship spot.

If the Knights are successful, they will be ranked seventh in the province and go to the championships at Durham College in Oshawa.

"It can be done if we minimize our errors and play like we have been lately," said Schatz.

Schatz said she'd like to thank Izzy Chavez and Jenn Carpenter veterans for the Knights, who played their last home game of the season.

Kelly Davies, #5, bumps the ball in women's volleyball action. The Knights beat Redeemer College 3-1.

Photo by Mike Wencel

EYE ON NIAGARA

Convocation dates set for June 13, 14, 15

Niagara College will hold five separate spring convocation ceremonies in June at the Glendale campus in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The first convocation ceremony is Tuesday, June 13, at 2 p.m. for students in the School of Computer Studies, School of Electrical/Electronics Engineering Technology and School of Media and Design.

The various programs include Computer Programmer, Computer Engineering Technology, Computer Programmer Analyst (Co-op), Computer Network Operations (Post-graduate), Electrical Engineering Technician, Electronics Engineering Technician, Electrical Engineering Technology — Power Systems (Co-op), Electronics Engineering Technology (Co-op), Arts and Design Fundamentals — Graphic Design Production, Journalism-Print, Broadcasting — Radio, Television and Film, Interactive Multimedia (Post-graduate), Professional Screenwriting (Post-graduate) and Public Relations (Post-graduate).

The second convocation ceremony is Tuesday, June 13, at 7 p.m. for students in the School of Administrative Studies, School of Construction, Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering Technology, School of Justice Studies, Continuing Education and Distance Learning, and Ventures — Employment and Training Services.

The various programs include Office Administration — Executive (Co-op), Manufacturing Technician, Quality Engineering Technician, Construction Engineering Technology — Arch-itecture, Mech-anical Engineering Technology (Co-op), Correctional Worker, Law and Security Administration, Law Clerk (Co-op), Police Foundations, Labour Studies and Labour Studies, Health and Safety.

The third convocation ceremony is Wednesday, June 14, at 2 p.m. for students in the School of Business and Entrepreneurship, School of Culinary Arts, and School of Hospitality and Tourism.

The various programs include Business — Accounting (Academic and Co-op), Business — Retail Man-agement, Business — Sales, Business Administration — Accounting (Academic), Business Administration — Accounting (Co-op), Business — Administration —Human Re-sources (Co-op), Bus-iness Ad-ministration — Marketing (Co-op), Business Administration — Operations Management (Co-op), International Trade (Post-graduate), Culinary Management and Hotel Management Systems (Post-graduate).

The fourth convocation ceremony is Wednesday, June 14, at 7 p.m. for students in the School of Community Studies.

The various programs include Early Childhood Education, Educational Resources and Special Needs, Human Relations, Recreation and Leisure Services, Social Service Worker, Child and Youth Worker and Special Event Management (Post-graduate).

The fifth convocation ceremony is Thursday, June 15, at 2 p.m. for students in the Centre for Environmental Training, School of General and Preparatory Studies, School of Health Studies and School of Horticulture and Agribusiness.

The various programs include Environmental, Health and Safety Co-ordinator, Environmental Technician — Field and Laboratory (Co-op), Environmental Technician — Water Resources (Co-op), Geographic Information Systems Technician — Native, Ecosystems Restoration (Post-graduate), Environmental Assessment (Post-graduate), Environmental Management (Post-graduate), Geographic Information Systems (Post-graduate), College Vocational, General Arts and Science — Health Science Preparatory, General Arts and Science, Dental Assistant (Levels 1 and 2), Pharmacy Assistant, Dental Hygiene, Horticultural Technician (Co-op) and Landscape Technician (Co-op).

Additional information can be obtained by telephoning Al Vaughan, college registrar, at 735-2211, Ext. 7558.

Niagara students on television

Niagara College will soon have another news and information source focusing on local issues, events and people.

This week, the students in the second year of the college's Broadcasting — Radio, Television and Film (BRTF) program began broadcasting a live, weekly television program called Inside Niagara, directly from the college's television studios at the Welland campus.

Inside Niagara
weekly television program by BRTF students

Inside Niagara is produced entirely by students in the BRTF program. They rotate through jobs such as editing, producing, directing and presenting to gain experience in all aspects of the show's production.

The show is broadcast live at noon on Thursday and is re-broadcast Thursdays at 8:30 p.m. and Saturdays at noon and 5:30 p.m. on Cogeco Community Cable 10. The new season began this week and a new show will air every week through Thursday, April 24, excluding the week of Feb. 28, the college's Reading Week.

The students are looking to the community for story suggestions.

"The students have their own good ideas for segments, but we'd also like to hear from members of the community about what they'd like us to cover on the show," Stu Black, co-ordinator of the BRTF program and Inside Niagara's assignment editor, said in a media press release this week.

To submit an idea for a story for Inside Niagara, contact Black at 735-2211, Ext. 7434 or by e-mail at sblack@niagarac.on.ca or contact Graeme Bachiu, student producer, at 735-2211, Ext. 7435 or by e-mail at gbachiu@home.com.

College joins Audubon system

It's more good news for Niagara College students studying at the Glendale campus in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The college has joined the Audubon Co-operative Sanctuary System of Canada, an international program designed to help landowners preserve and enhance the environmental quality of their property.

The Audubon Co-operative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) for Business/Corporate Properties is an environmental education program that helps landowners and managers, and their employees demonstrate environmental stewardship, conservation, and wildlife enhancement initiatives at work.

"The Co-operative Sanctuary Program gives people an opportunity to do something good for the environment right where they live, work and play," Scott Martin, director of the Audubon Co-operative Sanctuary System of Canada, said in a press release issued by the college this week. "We welcome Niagara College's commitment to managing their grounds in an environmentally-sensitive manner."

By joining and participating in the ACSP, Niagara College will be involved in projects that further enhance wildlife habitat and conserve natural resources for the benefit of the local community, while offering employees and students hands-on environmental education projects.

These projects may include building and placing nest boxes for cavity-nesting birds, such as bluebirds and tree swallows, planting native flowers to attract songbirds, conserving water and energy and replacing solid wastes.

The Glendale campus is a 68-acre "living laboratory," says the college press release. It is one of hundreds of properties across Canada registered with the Audubon Co-operative Sanctuary System.

For more information, contact the Audubon Co-operative Sanctuary System of Canada at 115 First St., Suite #116, Collingwood, Ont., or telephone 1-705-429-2277.

Bentley offered coaching job

Kerby Bentley plays in his last volleyball home game against Redeemer College, of Ancaster, on Feb. 10. Bentley was given an Appreciation Award.

Photo by Jason Vizbulis

Niagara College offers students a wide variety of dental services available at minimal cost.

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